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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 27, NO. 1, JANUARY 1985

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Col. 2:8
Mk. 7:1-13
Mt. 15:1FF

TRADITIONS

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Harmless Custom or Religious Rite? Ezek. 22:26; 1 Tim. 4:1-3

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"And many such like things do ye." 13. Mt. 7:21-23

— David Pharr

editorial

BOOKS WE LOVE (1)

The secret is out: we love books. In fact, they are so much a part of our life and work that we simply cannot conceive of living without them. Emilie Paulsson expressed our sentiments well in the following lines:

Books are keys to wisdom's treasure;
Books are gates to lands of pleasures;
Books are paths that upward lead;
Books are friends. Come, let us read.

But of all the books that have contributed to our life and have carved a permanent place of love in our heart, one stands far out above all the others — the Bible, God's book divine! It is unique in origin, purpose, and composition — no other book in the world is in its class. And as far as we can tell, our love for it is boundless. It has been our teacher, our guide, and our companion from the inception of Christianity into our hearts. It is the foundation upon which we build everything — it is the center and circumference of our life. It is the word of Him who made heaven and earth; it reveals Him who came to save; it is the standard of ethical conduct; it exalts moral purity; it is the source of all true faith and practice; it instills hope; and it will be the standard by which all will be judged. It is inspired; it is deathless; it is perfect. It reveals our origin; states our duty; and gives our destiny. We love it; we believe it; we trust it; we follow it; we teach it. Its teaching is pure; its precepts holy; its message redemptive. No other book is like the Bible because it is from the mind of God; reveals the will of God; and shows the way of God. Its teaching makes one wise; believing it makes one true; following it makes one right. Many years ago (before we conceded that a poet we were not) we wrote the following lines (presented here, not as poetry, but as an early effort to express our deepest affections for the book of all books, the book that changed our life from despair to hope):

Blessed Bible, how I love it;
  It is everything to me.
When my life was hid in darkness
  Divine light was brought to me.

When my life was filled with sorrow
  And no hope was found within,
Then was brought to me its story
  That redeemed my soul from sin.

In it I learned of the great salvation
  That the prophets spoke of in old,
And now walking by its precepts,
  It preserves and keeps my soul.

We love other books, but we love them only because they have guided us in one way or another in our study and understanding of this one book — the book that brings us face to face with life so that we may stand in the face of death with no fear. Books that do not increase our love for and devotion to the Bible (and the Christ it reveals) are books that are not worth reading — they are books that had better never been written.

What a book the Bible is! We cannot help but feel sympathy for those who have never discovered its mines of wealth — never believed it, never studied it, never followed it. Their loss is incomparably great. How do people live without the Bible — without its saving power, its comforting power, its sustaining power? We do not know and we do not want to learn from experience.

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WORRY AND DEPRESSION

It seems that the more we have, the better off we are, the more our lives are ruled by anxiety and depression. These are heavy and unnecessary loads that Christians often carry as well. They worry (and thus become depressed) over matters that do not exist, that they can do nothing about, things in the past that cannot be changed, things in the future that may never come and things that should be left in the hands of God, where they belong. Usually there are only two classes of things that concern us: things that we can change and things that we cannot change. If a thing is in the former class, we ought to change it rather than worry about it. If in the latter class, all the worry in the world cannot change it. We ought to accept and live with it as best we can. If this is not followed, it leaves little or nothing to worry about.

As Christians we are servants of the Lord. e belong to Him. We are under His conol. And so is the whole universe. He has promised to take care of us if we trust Him. He said, "Take no thought [that means, don't worry about it] for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?. . . . Which of you by taking thought [worry] can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought [why worry] for raiment? . . . if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you. . . ? . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." (Selected quotes from Matt. 6:25-34.) If Christ is in control, and if we seek to do His will in all things (Matt. 6:33), what is there to worry about? Doesn't worry and depression suggest that the Lord either will not or cannot work all things for our good, as He has promised to do (Rom. 8:28)? Are we really trusting the Lord and leaving our care in His charge?

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This reminds us of a story that has come down to us from the wife of Martin Luther. It is said that during a very difficult period in Luther's life he was carrying many burdens and fighting many battles. Usually jolly and smiling, he was instead depressed and worried. His wife, Katherine, endured this for several days. Then one day she met him at the door wearing a black mourning dress. Luther asked, "Who died?"

"God," replied Katherine. 1985-86

"You foolish thing!" Luther exclaimed. "Why this foolishness?"

"It is true," she insisted. "God must have died, or Doctor Luther would not be so sorrowful."

It is reported that her therapy worked with Luther. And it should work with us. If God is alive, if Christ is ruling at His right hand, why are so many of His children filled with anxiety and depression? We do not know, but we do know that inspiration gives a solution. Peter said, "Casting all your cares upon him; for he careth for you." (1 Pet. 5:7.) That is, throw all your worries upon Him because He is concerned enough to take care of you. Do we believe it?

1985 — A CRUCIAL YEAR

With this issue we begin our 27th year of publishing **Carolina Christian.** That is a long life for a minor paper in the movement to restore New Testament Christianity. Many other papers have begun, lived a short while, done a tremendous amount of good, and then died. We began. . . . and we have continued to live. And in our judgement (though biased it may be) the paper is now on the threshold of its greatest contribution to truth and right, both in the Carolinas and around the world.

But with all the optimism we possess, we are not blind to the problems that confront us, some of which may prove to be more formidable than we can now foresee. As we enter this new year we are faced with some challenges that if not accepted and handled with wisdom and prudence could prove to be fatal. Two of the most pressing ones follow:

1. **Financial.** We thought a year ago that we had our financial house set in order, and we did. . . . then. But that enemy of sound fiscal responsibility, the ever increasing cost of production, has entered again and undermined our structure. Thus we must make

some financial adjustments, adjustments of such radical nature as to be painful to all of us. But if we survive it must be done (watch for details as we get the problems worked through). In the meantime we could again use generous financial contributions from all our friends. We are doing our best never to have to ask for such help again, but as of now, our best has not been good enough.

2. **Expansion.** We have no desire to back up or even stay where we are. Our aim is to go forward, offering more and more services that will advance the cause of Christ. For this reason we are trying to get into publication of good, sound, Scriptural, usable, and practical literature. We hope eventually we can realize enough profit from this to keep the paper afloat (thus relieving the financial pressure we have been under for the past 26 years). But we simply do not have the capital to get started. The Board of Directors have, however, launched out into the deep and contracted to publish the editor's **Commentary on Romans** (which should be ready for delivery by the time you read this — see ad on back cover) and we have also authorized Bill Smith to collect information for and edit an up-to-date directory of churches of Christ in the Carolinas (which should be ready by the first of April). The printing bill alone on these two items will be nearly $6,000.00. Now we do not have that kind of money. What are we to do? Our only hope is that you will purchase a generous supply of both books and thereby help us to build on the foundation we have laid.

While there is no hope that the paper will ever pay for itself from subscriptions alone, there is hope that we can expand our operation to the point where the whole business will be self-sustaining. What happens with our initial efforts this year could be crucial. And what happens in these efforts depends on the response of every reader to the service we offer. With your help we can succeed. Without it we will most assuredly fail. We believe we are offering the best possible service to the best people in the world. Are we then overly optimistic if we expect the best response in the history of this paper?

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A SERVICE OF LOVE

The Lord sent His people to preach the gospel to the lost and to minister to the needs of all, high and low, good and bad, moral and degraded, healthy and diseased. It is the most far reaching commission ever given to mortal man. It is so great that it will take all of us all the time we have with all we have to get the job done. But even more important, the only way it can be done is with hearts filled with love and compassion — love that impells us to go, to do, to serve. Hirelings are worthless in this task. There are things to be done that no amount of money could entice us to do.

One of the finest lessons we have ever heard was told to us by Bill Smith. Bill was living and working in Rockingham and the church there (all white at that time) was trying to reach the black community with the soul-saving message of truth. But for years they had been totally unsuccessful. Then the church acquired the services of Jackson P. English from Lumberton to come hold a meeting, especially directed to the blacks in Rockingham. In a short time brother English had baptized a considerable number and started another church. Bill asked him, "How did you do it? We have been trying for years to reach them but with no success at all. And you come in here and in a short meeting baptize a good number. How did you do it?" Brother English gave a reply that we should all take to heart. He said "You have to wallow with them and smell their breath." By this he meant that one must get involved with those to whom he is ministering. This is not always pleasant or desirable (that is, not in keeping with our high cultured taste). Wallowing with them may mean getting our hands dirty, stepping down and partaking of their level of living, and their breath may not be pleasant to smell. But love demands action — rendering the needed service regardless of the problems, dangers, or inconveniences involved. There is simply no other way. The Master did it; so must we.

A story that has been around for a long time illustrates what is involved in a service of love. It says that a group of American businessmen were touring in the orient when they came upon a mission station. As they passed through the station as curious onlookers, they saw a missionary nurse who was bent down tenderly bathing the gangrenous feet of a leper. One of the men stepped back in revulsion and exclaimed, "I would not do that for a million dollars!" The nurse looked at him with compassion and understanding and softly replied, "Neither would I!"

Why was this missionary engaged in the undesirable and dangerous service of washing a leper's feet? It was a service of love. Nothing else can explain it. And this is the kind of love and concern that brother Jackson had in mind when he said that we must wallow with them and smell their breath. When we have this kind of love, when we love unconditionally, for the lost of the world, how can they resist the message of Christ we will bring to them?

Sound Doctrine

Lindell Doty, Madisonville, KY

Editor's Note: *Doug Couch sent the following item to us with the suggestion that we might profit from it. We did. And we think others will also. We do not know brother Doty, but we do know that he presents a challenging thought, one that more of us should heed. We deplore the tendency today to judge the soundness of a man only by what he says and by where he stands on the current controversial issue. Often little or no consideration is given to how one lives, what kind of attitude he displays, whether he pays his debts, loves his wife, works to save souls, etc. The "soundest" of men may differ on a thousand things with no difficulty or no marking and dis fellowshiping. What seems to matter most, the vital thing, the standard by which "soundness" is determined, is whether one is on the right bandwagon on the issue currently being discussed, whether it be the war question, the unity question, the rebaptism question, the Holy Spirit question, etc. According to many, one can be sound and differ with them on many things but he cannot be sound if he differs with them on the current issue (although they may have differed on the same thing for many, many years and considered each other sound before the thing became an issue). In our judgement no teaching can be sound that does not emphasize Christ as the Savior, the Scriptures as the only standard of faith and practice, the gospel as God's power (and plan) to save, a pure life morally, honest ethical practices, unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, love of brethren, and any other things the Bible teaches. Soundness in doctrine should not be separated from soundness in life. One without the other is a sham. In short, sound doctrine is a balance of all that divine revelation teaches. He who neglects any aspect of the Lord's teaching, willingly or otherwise, is to that extent unsound. Christianity is not a one-subject system. It is, however, a one-standard system, and every aspect of one's life and teaching must be regulated by and in conformity with that standard, the word of the living God. Then and only then can we be considered sound.*

What do you think of when you hear or read the phrase "sound doctrine"? Some seem to think it means preaching about fundamental things: faith, repentance, confession, baptism, and the establishment, name, organization, and uniqueness of the church, etc. Some seem to think it means preaching to "skin" the denominations and sects. Some think that loud, and sometimes harsh, preaching is "sound doctrine." To some, any preacher who does not do at least one of these each time he preaches (and some want all three at the same time), is not a "sound" preacher. Does "sound doctrine" mean this?

The word "sound" means healthy. The Greek word can be translated sound, healthy, whole, wholesome, or safe and sound. It occurs eight times in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus referring to sound doctrine, words, in the faith, and to speech.

The word "doctrine" can be translated "teaching" and refers to the substance; the things or materials taught. It occurs fifteen times in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. In 2 Timothy 4:2, a different word is used which means the act of teaching.

The phrase "sound doctrine" occurs in 1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9, 2:1. In two of these places it is clear that "sound doctrine" includes morals and ethical matters. In 1 Timothy 1:10, Paul sums up a list of things which were unlawful and thus sinful by saying, ". . . if there be any other thing that is contrary to 'sound doctrine.' " It is clear from this passage that sound doctrine includes how we are to live the Christian life, even our conduct in the home.

Heathy teaching is balanced teaching. Sound preachers preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2), all of it! It takes a lot more courage to preach the moral and ethical problems among Christians who are present than it does to skin the sects, none of whom are present, or to preach fundamental things, which most everyone present would agree. Sound or healthy doctrine is a balanced presentation of truth, and whole truth, presented in the right spirit to meet the needs of the hearers, the design of which is to produce healthy, whole, safe and sound Christians.

Let's Go Eat

T. Douglas Couch, Asheboro, NC

Scripture exalts the practice of Christians eating meals together. Hospitality is a virture which mature Christians are to possess (1 Tim. 3:2). Some even ate with angels not knowing who they were (Heb. 12:2). "Be hospitable to one another without complaint" (1 Pet. 2:14, NASB). What is so special then about eating at someone's house or at the church's meeting place after services?

When Jesus wanted to describe heaven He painted a picture of friends eating together. In the next life, "Many shall come from east and west, and dine at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 8:11, NASB margin.) Jesus refused to fast because His ministry was like a bridegroom at His own wedding rehearsal dinner (Mark 2:19-20). He said that accepting God's salvation was like accepting an invitation to a great banquet (Luke 14:16-24). The early churches saw the significance of eating together and regularly had "dinner-on-the-grounds" following each Lord's day service (1 Cor. 11:17-22; Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2:13 margin). Interestingly enough, the only three references we have of their fellowship meals were apostolic corrections of abuses. This clearly shows the early practice of eating together.

The Jews in Jesus' day knew, as we know today, that mealtimes nourish our bodies as well as our relationships. Family and social ties are strengthened by eating together. We accept the one who eats at our table. Jews were horrified because Jesus received sinners and ate with them (Luke 15:2). To receive someone is to accept him and take him into your heart (Rom. 15:7). On numerous occasions the enemies of Jesus criticized Him for eating with publicans and sinners (Matt. 9:11; 11:19; Luke 15:2). Yet the groundwork laid by Jesus in these meals resulted in many additions to the church after Pentecost.

Today we have times when Christians eat together in restaurants or at "dinners-on-the-grounds." These should be encouraged. However it saddens me that many neglect these opportunities to be together. Though some cannot attend for health, diet, or family reasons, there are many who could attend if they cultivated more affection for the brethren.

The dynamic church on Pentecost "continued steadfastly in fellowship." (Acts 2:42.) Remember that the next time a fellow Christian says, "Let's go eat."

Humanistic Education

Max Patterson, Henderson, TN

Sometimes we say Humanism has infiltrated our schools and public life in our country. At times there are those who either look skeptically at us, or do not have the least idea what we are talking about.

The following is a statement from a Professor of Education and Psychiatry in the Faculty of Medicine and Graduate School of Education at Harvard University: "Every child in America entering school at the age of five is mentally ill, because he comes to school with certain allegiances toward our founding fathers, toward our elected officials, toward parents, toward a belief in a supernatural Being, toward the sovereignity of this nation as a separate entity. It's up to you teachers to make all of these sick children well by creating the international children of the future."

Further, this statement from the January-February issue of **The Humanist,** 1983 indicates what Humanistic educators are planning to do to your children: ". . . The battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith." "The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new — rotting corpse of Christianity . . . and the new faith of Humanism."

Please remember some of the basic tenants of humanism are atheism, belief in the theory of evolution, amorality, and self-centered man.

Obviously the humanists feel that we as parents neither have the ability to rear children correctly or the responsibility to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4). The Psalmist said, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." (Ps. 2:2-4.)

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A Qualified Character

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

Philip was an evangelist who was a soul-winner. Yet, he was not effective merely because he was an evangelist. It was his character that made him a soul-winner. Let us notice Philip, our example, as he spent some time teaching an Ethiopian (Acts 8:27-35).

1. He possessed a knowledge of God's word (35), ready to give an answer for the hope that was within **his** heart (1 Pet. 3:15).
2. He was bold (30), not afraid of the individual's feelings and response (2 Tim. 1:7).
3. He was compassionate (27), a love for the lost that may have "burned in his bones as a fire" (Jer. 20:9).
4. He was obedient (27), not one to argue with God or complain about His commands (1 John 5:1-4).
5. He was sensitive to guidance (27), the Lord's way the desire and choice of his heart (Matt. 6:19-24; 26:42).
6. He was tactful (35), no brow beating but reasoned teaching (2 Tim. 2:23-26).
7. He was enthusiastic (30), a love for the work that moved him without hesitation (2 Cor. 5:14).

Whether teaching a crowd or an individual, Philip was effective as God's servant because he allowed God to develop this character in him. Let Philip be our example for our own service that we give unto God. We can teach the world and bring **all** who would believe to Christ in **every** generation.

Biographical Preaching

John Waddey, Knoxville, TN

Moses reminds us, "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." (Deut. 32:7.) Biographical preaching looks to those of olden times for lessons for today. No more fascinating endeaver can be enjoyed than character studies of the personalities of the Bible. The lives of notable people of the past are exciting and challenging to every generation. Goethe wrote, "Man alone is interesting to men." Christians have a rich heritage of great biographies to study, for the Bible overflows with life stories of both good and bad people. From the lives of those gone before we can learn many lessons, both of things to be done and others to avoid. Paul writes concerning ancient Israel. "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." (1 Cor. 10:6.) Since a congregation will never grow weary of biographical lessons from the Scripture, a wise teacher will make extended use of such in his lessons.

Everett Dirkson wrote, "Gallant men have faced dangerous and long, ardous journeys to widen the borders of man's freedom. Each in his time contributed to our tradition something which has inspired not only his own generation but the generations that follow." Great and good men and women inspire us by their noble examples to walk the paths of righteousness. Thus we imitate Paul as he imitated Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). Any person will be influenced to greated things by a study of Gideon, Barnabas, or Elijah. All will be warned by the mistakes of Judas, Bathsheba or Herod.

The author is constantly looking for fresh ways to present the old principles of the gospel lest his lessons become stale and repetitious to his hearers. Biographical preaching is a marvellous way to meet this need. Even youngsters love character studies.

Biographical preaching offers a unique and versatile approach to preaching in a local congregation. After one has served a church for many years, how does he preach on those same essential themes that need to be taught repeatedly without becoming repetious and boring? How does one keep his approach to salvation or baptism fresh after he has already preached ten sermons on these subjects? If one wishes to preach on baptism why not present a lesson on the man from Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-40)? He was baptized. This is the major point of the lesson. If you would preach on the errors of modern "faith healing," preach on the lame man at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:1-26). Have you a problem brother in your congregation? Would a lesson on Diotrophes fit his need (2 John 9-11)?

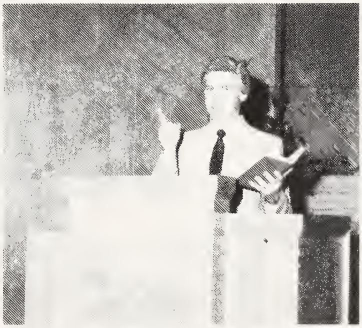
Our understanding of the Scriptures is greatly enlarged when we take time to learn of the social and economic, the religious and historical backgrounds of the key characters. Extended research and study of the men over many years is as close as possible to actually walking and talking with them in their ancient environment; and what a delight that is!

One problem to be faced is where to find a good source of biographical materials that are homiletically arranged. For several years this scribe has been collecting such books and lessons. Commonly three to six sources are studied before his own outline is sketched.

To be interesting, such lessons need to move swiftly. Getting bogged down on any one point is usually fatal. Lessons should be delivered in a 30-40 minute timeframe.

Biographical lessons are really a variety of expository preaching. All agree that both the speaker and his audience grow most on the expository diet. Too, when we get thoroughly acquainted with the people of the Bible, we are better able to comprehend the messages God sent to them. In addition, we see ourselves reflected in their lives, their struggles, failures and victories (James 1:25). Such studies aid us in improving our lot.

Surely God's book is an inexhaustable treasure house of spiritual riches which will ever thrill the heart of eager students. Let us search them out and utilize them for our own benefit and those that hear us.



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Here's The Answer

To Questions You've Asked

Howard Winters

Howard Winters

"Why do you oppose abortion and at the same time approve birth control? What is the difference? Is not abortion a form of birth control? It seems to me that you are inconsistent."
— Name withheld.

There are actually four questions here and I will reply to them in the following order (slightly reworded): 1. Why do you oppose abortion? 2. Why do you approve birth control? 3. What is the difference in the two? 4. Is abortion not a form of birth control?

1. Why do you oppose abortion? I have delivered myself time and again on this subject on these pages — so many times in fact that I will now only briefly state the grounds of my opposition. Simply stated, I oppose abortion because I believe it is wrong and I believe it is wrong (even in cases of rape and incest) because it is willfully and premeditatingly taking innocent human life. I can think of only one exception to this rule, namely, in the extremely rare cases in which either the child or the mother must be sacrificed in order for the other to live. But in such cases the action cannot rightly be called abortion. Nature has forced upon us the choice of one life or the other. It is therefore an act over which we have no control. We do not choose to take an innocent life; we choose rather to save one life over the other — to save one rather than to lose both. In such cases no sin is involved regardless of which life is chosen (it is conceded however that in the vast majority of cases the mother would be chosen over the child, but since a choice must be made, no crime would be committed if the child was, for one reason or another, saved at the sacrifice of the mother).

The only possibly way to justify abortion, in any case, is to shift the focus from the rights of the unborn child to the rights of the mother, and such a shift ignores absolutely the fact that the child is a living human being (with all the divine rights of life and protection). Our society (with the approval of the Supreme Court) has said in essence that the rights of the mother are to be considered over the rights of the child (in fact, the child has no rights and is not subject to the protection of law). It is her right to decide whether it lives or dies. But who gave her this right? By what standard does she have the right to take innocent human life? What moral code gives her the right to take innocent human life? What moral code gives her the right to destroy another life for no reason higher than her convenience? No one or no code gives her such right. It is a presumption — one born out of a disregard of human life and carried out in self-interest. Thus I believe that when that innocent life is taken the act is murder — premeditated!

What is murder but the premeditated taking of innocent life? And what is abortion but the premeditated taking of innocent life while it is still in the womb? If this conclusion is correct, and I believe it is, then every passage in the Bible that prohibits murder can be applied, either directly or in principle, to abortion. If this conclusion is true (and no one has refuted it except with the unreasonable assumption that the embryo, the baby while it is still in the womb, is not human life) then Christians have no choice but to oppose all abortion just as they oppose all other murder. This I do. And I believe I do so on solid Scriptural grounds.

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2. Why do you approve birth control? While I do not recall having gone on record as doing so, I certainly do approve birth control within certain prescribed Scriptural limitations. I would not say, however, that I approve all birth control. My approval would depend upon what one means by birth control. If one should use that expression to mean total birth control, that is, the practice of eliminating all births from all marriages, then I would have no choice but to oppose that also. One of the divine purposes (not the only one, but certainly one) in marriage is procreation — man reproducing after his kind. God said, when He made man male and female, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." (Gen 1:28.) After the flood, He gave the same command (Gen. 9:1). As far as I know, this command has never been resented. It is thus God's intented purpose for man to marry, to have children, and thereby keep the earth populated. For this reason I think total birth control would be against the will of God — it would frustrate God's plan and destroy man from the fact of the earth.

But if by birth control one means only limiting the number of children any given couple has, then I do not oppose that — in fact, I approve it. I do not know any Scriptures that bear directly on this subject. And without direct Scriptural instructions on the matter, we are forced to reach our conclusions (either pro or con) from principles which are approved in the Scriptures (and when this is the case, I do not believe that we can rightly force our conclusions upon another or make them a test of faithfulness or fellowship). I do not have space here to explore all the principles upon which my conclusions are based (in fact, I have never before tried to justify them), but here are two:

(1.) Reason. I have always believed that God expects man to use his intellect and thus to apply reason to any subject. That is, he is to be reasonable. With the unprecedented population explosion that has occurred in the 20th century (which can best be seen in countries such as China, India, and Africa), it seems to me that the only reasonable solution is to limit, to the extent of our knowledge and within the guidelines of Genesis 1:28 and 9:1, the number of children born. Is it reasonable for a country (or family) to bear more children than it has the resources to support?

(2.) Provisions. It is the duty of parents to provide for and train their children in the right way of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). While not impossible, it would seem incredible for most modern couples, with all the financial and other pressures they endure, to be capable of properly providing for 10, 12, or 15 children. The culture of frontier America made a large number of children both possible and profitable — that is, it was practical (I am myself the 11th of 12 children born to Dad and Mother), but the industral culture of the latter half of this century, when both parents, either by choice or by force, work outside the home the proper bearing and caring for a large family becomes all but impossible.

Thus it seems to me that the best and most logical thing to do is to limit the number of children to what each family can reasonably care for.

One important thing should be remembered: the Bible looks at children as a great blessing, one bestowed by the Lord Himself (Ps. 127). Thus the bearing and the rearing of children are not things to be totally avoided by marital partners, but rather blessings to be enjoyed. I would thus not advise any healthy couple who marry to avoid having children. I believe that they are within their rights to limit them, but to eliminate them altogether is another question. (Of course there are some who cannot bear children and there are others who should not, but these are the exceptions, not the rule.)

3. What is the difference in the two? The difference is in preventing conception of human life and in taking it after it has been conceived. If I have argued correctly, it is not wrong to prevent conception within Scriptural limitations. But it is wrong, absolutely wrong, to destroy that innocent human life after it has been conceived. The difference in the two then is the difference in not beginning life at all and in destroying it once it has begun.

4. Is abortion not a form of birth control? Unquestionably some so use it. But the question misses the point. It should be: Is abor-

tion a legitimate (or Scriptural) form of birth control? Indeed, it is not and never can be. What is the difference in principle in taking the life of a child before birth and after birth? Killing all babies under two years old might be a means of population control, but would anyone argue that such would be a legitimate means? In order to try to elimate Christ as (what he supposed was) a threat to his kingdom, Herod killed the babies in Bethlehem (Matt. 2). Personally I would as soon try to justify Herod (in killing babies after birth) as to justify abortion (killing babies before birth). Human life is human life whether it is inside or outside the womb. And it is simply not right to take innocent human life — to shed innocent blood.

I would not waste my time nor yours in trying to convince anyone that I am always consistent in everything, but this one thing I know: to argue that one is inconsistent in opposing abortion while approving birth control (within Scriptural bounds) is to confuse things that absolutely differ.

The Basic Elements Of Blessedness

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

The term "blessedness," means just about what the term "happiness" signifies, as that expression is ordinarily understood. A good illustration of the basic meaning of the word is found in the following quotation from the American Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

All normal people crave happiness; they demand it as their right; and they pursue it with all their power. Many moral and religious leaders of the world have sought for happiness in one way or another; but it remained for Jesus to reveal the secret of true happiness. He did this in that section of His great Sermon on the Mount which we speak of as the beatitudes. Some would explain the beatitudes as applying to a "perfect kingdom" which is to be attained in an age beyond history. But since "the kingdom of God is within" His people, having been fully set up on the first Pentecost following the Savior's ascension, we must accept the conclusion that these rules of happiness are applicable to the Lord's people here and now.

Whose World Is Real? The first requisite for being happy or enjoying the state of true blessedness is to settle the question of sovereignty in one's life. Not only must every life be integrated around some central sovereign authority, but, according to Jesus, that sovereign must be God. See John 5:30; 8:29; Matthew 6:33; Isaiah 26:3. But with most of us the sovereign is not God, but our own selves. We want to be happy, to be sure, but we also want to set the conditions of our happiness — we want to be happy on our own terms. Even when we pray we think that we should have that which we think is best for us. This attitude must be changed, if we are to enjoy real happiness.

New Sources of Satisfaction. It is when the question of sovereignty is settled that new sources of happiness begin to appear in our lives, (James 1:17). If we would indeed be happy we must be used of God rather than endeavor to use Him for our own ends, (Matt. 20:28; Acts 20:35). The Lord's purpose in coming to the earth was to save men; not to satisfy them.

The Beatitudes. The kingdom of Christ and kingdom of Satan are diametrically opposed to each other, and there is, consequently, a radical difference between the citizens of the two kingdoms. The mission of Jesus was and is to call men out of the kingdom of Satan and into His own glorious kingdom; but He has made it plain that before one can enter His kingdom he must undergo a radical and complete change. The character of those who undergo this change and the blessedness or happiness which shall be theirs as citizens of this new kingdom are described in the beatitudes. It is in this part of his sermon that Jesus furnishes His people with a universal ideal and a universal criterion.

Each Beatitude Consists of Three Parts. 1. The ascription of blessedness — "blessed," the beginning word of each beatitude. The term "blessed" has about the same meaning as the word "happy." The word blessed is a key word in the beatitudes. The condition of our blessedness or happiness is within ourselves. Our happiness does not depend upon what we have, but upon what we are; not upon our position, but upon our disposition; not upon the state of our circumstances, but upon the state of our soul. 2. The description of character — "the poor in spirit," "the meek," etc. The eight statements made here by Jesus do not refer to eight different classes of people, some poor, others meek, etc.; they all describe the character of each citizen of the kingdom of heaven. 3. The description of blessedness — "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It should be noted here that there is a definite relation between the character indicated and the blessing described. The first three and the eighth is a relation of contrast while the others describe its nature or its blessings.

These Beatitudes Reveal a Beautiful Order of Arrangement. 1. **The beginning of faith.** The first beatitude (spiritual poverty); next he will mourn over the cause of this spiritual poverty and third this consciousness of and sorrow for sin will humiliate him, 2. **The progress of faith.** Fourth beatitude. 3. **The perfection of faith.** The fifth, sixth, and seventh beatitudes. 4. **The trial of faith.** Eighth beatitude.

The Beginning of Faith

The First Beatitude — "Blessed are the poor in spirit." A man is poor in purse who has no money, and likewise, a man is poor in spirit who has no spiritual resources. When he realizes this condition he is ready and willing to listen to the Lord, and to accept help from the Lord on the Lord's own terms. The poor in spirit are those who are utterly destitute of spiritual resources, and are dependent entirely upon God and His mercy. Such people see themselves as they really are in God's sight; and they are conscious of nothing except their need of His love and forgivenness. **"For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."** The kingdom of heaven is theirs because they will seek it, that is, they will ask for, and conform themselves to the conditions of entrance into and membership in the kingdom of heaven (John 3:5; Acts 2:37-38; Col. 1:13). **The Second Beatitude — "Blessed are they that mourn."** Notice the relation of this beatitude to the first one. This relationship is forcefully illustrated in the case of the prodigal son, Luke 15:17-19 — the first, misery, and the confession of sin. The sorrow is on account of sin, not because of the consequences of sin. The saddest thing in the world is not a soul that sorrows, but one that is so dull that it is incapable of feeling grief at all — a heart so selfish that nothing but that which touches its comfort and ease moves it to a twinge of feeling. Not all mourners will be comforted, but only those who mourn with reference to sin. **"For they shall be comforted."** Godly sorrow causes a person to seek God's mercy; and everyone who seeks shall find. Those who mourn, as indicated in the text, will receive that divine aid which the Lord has provided for them who set their minds on Him (See Rom. 14:17). **The Third Beatitude — "Blessed are the meek."** The relation of this with the first two beatitudes may also be illustrated by the case of the prodigal son — misery, confession of sin, unworthiness. The primary meaning of the term "meek" is mild, or gentle. It carries with it the idea of gentleness of strength, patience in the reception of injuries, believing that God will vindicate us. As used in the text, it seems to refer to that humility of spirit which results from the death of self-righteousness (first beatitude) and the confession of sin (second beatitude). **"For they shall inherit the earth."** They shall enjoy the earth more fully while in it.

The Progress of Faith

The fourth Beatitude — "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled," sustains a direct relationship to the first group of beatitudes. Out of the depths of conscious spiritual destitution, mourning over sin, and broken-heartedness, the one thus affected begins to hunger and thirst for the greatest of all treasures — righteousness (Ps. 130:1). The words hungering and thirsting picture to us a man longing for that which God has to offer, just as one ravenous with hunger and parched and panting with thirst longs for that which will satisfy his natural desires, that is, food and drink. **What is the meaning of righteousness?** It is, in a broad sense, a condition acceptable to God. It involves purity of life and correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting. The essence of righteousness includes perfect love for God and perfect love for one's neighbor (see Matt. 22:37-40).

The Perfection of Faith

The three beatitudes of this section describe some of the blessings which come to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. **Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.**" Mercy has two aspects. 1. The alleviation of suffering, and 2. Forgiveness of wrongs, or the proper attitude toward the sinner. Here Christ is not speaking of sin; He is speaking of the sinner. Our danger is to import into our attitude toward the sinner the hatred we have to his sin. Christ's interest is always in the man. How is he to be cured? It is with this in mind that He calls for merciful judgment. How can we judge until we know the facts? And how can we know the full facts till we know the man himself — know what hidden fires of passion burn in his blood kindled long ago by other's sin, what temptations have tracked him down, how far has the community contributed to his fall? "**Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**" (The pure in heart are those who are free from evil desires and purposes. This condition is possible only by the absolute enthronement of God in the affections. It comes only to the pure in heart; for no other can see the King. Those whose hearts are pure see Him by faith here; and they shall see Him face to face in heaven. "**Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.**" The reference is not merely to peaceable men, but rather to the active promoters of peace. Such people not only keep the peace themselves; they also seek to bring men into harmony with each other and with God. God is a God of peace, and those like Him shall be called His children (James 3:13-18).

The Trial of Faith

No man knows how strong his faith is until it is tried; and since none but the faithful can please God, it is to our advantage that our faith be subjected to an adequate test (James 1:2-4). "**Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**" Not those who have merely passed through certain experiences, but those who bear abiding traces of the persecution of their characters. This trial of faith is stated in these words: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." The three ways in which this test manifests itself, as set forth in the verse, are: 1. Reproach: revile, be abusive in speech; 2. Persecute: ill-treatment; 3. Say all manner of evil against one falsely, for Christ's sake: Every conceivable evil, slander, and the like. The attitude which the Lord wants those who are thus treated to have is stated in verse 12. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." (See Luke 6:22,23.) Some of the reasons why those who are persecuted for Christ's sake are called blessed are: 1. Because these trials will indicate the genuine character of their faith (Luke 21:13). 2. Because Christian character is purged and continuously developed through suffering (Rom. 5:3-5; James 1:2-4). 3. Because persecution is followed by a great reward in heaven, a reward in proportion to, yet much greater than, the sacrifice (Luke 6:22-23; James 1:12; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17-18).

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Why You Should Be A Christian

John Waddey, Knoxville, TN

Man being a rational creature, seeks for reasons when he is challenged to do something. May I suggest eleven good reasons why all responsible people should want to become Christians.

1. To please your Creator. This is the whole duty of man (Eccl. 12:13). All normal people feel a responsibility to those that they love, to those who have been their benefactors. God has given us our very lives and daily sustains us (Acts 17:25). He has blessed us with our family, our health and a good earth. As a child seeks approval of his beloved parents, so should we seek to please our God.

2. To express your appreciation to Jesus for what he did for you. He died for you (Rom. 5:8). He will save you (Luke 19:10), if you love him and keep his commandments (John 14:15). Ingratitude is the most heinous of all of man's sins (Luke 17:12-19). No good man who truly understands the price Jesus has paid for us will refuse to obey Him.

3. To lay hold on the abundant life **now** (John 10:10). Christ gives us **peace** (Phil. 4:7); **joy** unspeakable (1 Pet. 1:8); **security** (Matt. 6:33). Ours is a world of miserable, unhappy people. Sin has tainted and spoiled every life it has touched. Jesus, the great physician, can cure our malady and give us a new life that is truly worth living.

4. To prepare your life for eternity. "Lay hold on the life which is life indeed." (1 Tim. 6:19.) From ancient times, men have pondered, "If a man die will he live again?" (Job 14:14.) Christ drew back the curtain to show us life and immortality (2 Tim. 1:10). He invites all men to be His guests in eternity (Matt. 11:28-30). You must decide to accept or reject His invitation.

5. To escape the judgment of hell (Matt. 23:33). "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." (Acts 2:40.) Just as you would exert every effort to save yourself from a burning house, so you surely should want to save your undying soul from torment (Luke 16:19-31).

6. To strengthen your home against the ravages of disruption caused by sin (Ps. 127:1). Never has the home been under such heavy attack as in our generation. To save our family; to raise our children successfully, we need God's help. "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom. 8:31.)

Because you love your mate and want to be the best marriage partner possible. No finer gift could be offered than a Christian life. Solomon says of a righteous woman, "Her husband also . . . praiseth her" (Prov. 31:28.) Husbands must love their wives even as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25).

8. Because you love your children and want them to have the best home possible . . . because you want them to have the best example to follow (Prov. 20:7; Eph. 6:4). Your children can have the best of food, clothing and shelter, medical care and education and yet be neglected and deprived if you do not give them a Christian home environment.

9. So that you might be in a better position to help preserve our country and maintain our freedom. "Righteousness exalts a nation." (Prov. 14:34.) Our nation is deteriorating morally at a frightening pace. But a nation is only the sum of its people. A better world begins with you, with me. Christians are the salt of the earth that will not only flavor a society for good, but also preserve it from moral decay (Matt. 5:13).

10. To stop being just a spectator and to become a participant in the greatest cause in the world. All that is needed for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

11. For the personal satisfaction of knowing you have done the right thing, the noble thing, the best that you could do. You can then walk in your integrity with a good conscience (Job 27:5).

Carolina Church News

NEWS BRIEFS

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

We plan to have a report in the next issue on contributions made by Carolina churches for relief work in Ethiopia. We would appreciate a report from any congregation that has participated in this. A report should be sent even though the information may have appeared in bulletins.

NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh. Brooks avenue has reported 82 baptisms through November 1984. A special contribution in December came to $58,000. This included commitments for the next six months. This was in addition to the regular contribution of $8,076.

Roanoke Rapids. The Dan Williams family has decided to move to the work in El Dorado, Arkansas.

Goldsboro. The elders of the Goldsboro church have rented the largest auditorium available in their area for a Gospel meeting to be conducted April 22-26,1985. James Kennedy will be the speaker. The effort will be so intensive that congregations within a 50-75 mile radius will very likely benefit directly.

Charlotte. The Providence Road church recently sent a contribution of $6,000 to assist in feeding the hungry of the nation of Ghana.

N.C. Baptisms

Mooresville 1; Northview, Statesville, 1; Burlington 1; Archdale, Charlotte, 1; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 1. Total: 5.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Myrtle Beach. A special contribution toward classroom expansion netted $3,325. This was in addition to a regular contribution the same Sunday of $1,655.

S.C. Baptisms

Essex Village, Charleston, 1; St. Andrews Rd., Columbia, 1; Northeast, Greenville, 4; Central, Spartanburg, 1; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill, 1. Total: 8.

Spartanburg, Fairview. Bill Griffin, former minister at the Goodland Kansas church of Christ has been appointed as minister at Fairview effective November 1, 1984. The Fairview church has had nine baptisms.

Editorial Book Reviews

What the Bible Says About Suffering, Willie W. White; College Press, PO Box 1132, Joplin, MO 64802; 305 pages, cloth $13.50.

Since suffering is a common lot of us all (2 Tim. 3:12), and since most of us cannot understand why it happens to us rather than to someone else, the subject of this book is a matter of concern for everyone, especially Christians. We want to know why God permits suffering in His children, why He does not eliminate it from our lives, and, if not eliminated, what purpose it can serve. All the answers may not presently be available to us, but Willie White has tackled the problem and he writes from a heart that has been taught to feel deeply by acquaintance with much sorrow. He does not approach the subject philosophically, but Biblically and homiletically. And for this reason, for most of us at least, it is an extremely practical book, not loaded down with logic that is beyond our power to understand. In short, it offers simple, sound, Scriptural solutions to the problem of suffering. The book is loaded with usuable material for both the teacher and preacher, including many touching illustrations, anecdotes, and poetry. It has a good deal of personal matter in it but it all enriches the book with both interest and instruction. The chapter on Eric (his 12-year-old grandson who died after a three-year struggle with leukemia) is one of the most touching stories we have ever read — it would do honor to the pages of popular magazines, such as **Reader's Digest.** We hope the book will find its way into many libraries and be used by many people, both to help them personally to endure suffering and to make them better comforters of others who suffer. We are glad we read it; we think you will be too.

Gospel Gems, Bill Dillon; privately published, P.O. Box 506, Lafayette, GA 30728; 48 pages, paper $2.50.

A collection of about 70 short articles written by the author over the years. The material would be easily adapted for local newspapers, bulletins, classroom use, short radio or TV sermons, or even full sermons. It would be hard not to get your money's worth out of this one.

A Debate With Mormons, Bill Dillon; privately published; 53 pages, paper $3.75.

A series of letters written by Bill Dillon (Christian) and Dr. and Mrs. Gray Yaws (Mormons) discussing (or supposedly so) the authenticity of the **Book of Mormon** — the latter affirming that it is inspired and the former denying it. The Haws, typical of all Mormons when their faith is questioned, become angry and aggitated and throw caution to the wind. They thus wrangle more than they prove. And they make it clear that what they say cannot be taken as official Mormon doctrine? We cannot help but ask, Why present it then? Dillon follows them, trying to bring reason and truth out of the confusion. He shows that not one smattering of proof was presented. Makes both interesting and profitable reading.

Teenagers and Peer Pressure, Stephen Douglas Williford; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060; Abilene, TX 72604; 64 pages, paper $2.50.

A penetrating and challenging study book of 13 lessons especially for teenagers. Each lesson is based on a Biblical character or principle and deals with the problems confronting youth today, along with practical applications for solutions. It is designed to help them make the right decisions based upon Scriptural grounds. It will enrich your teenage class.

Power Lines, Robert L. Burgess; Quality; 120 pages, paper $4.75.

A compilation of short, power-packed articles proven effective for radio spots, newspaper columns, devotionals, church bulletins, and sermon starters. It contains many illustrations that both the preacher and teacher can return to time and again. It is devotional, interesting, instructive, and profitable — it will encourage one to keep on running the Christian race.

Young People and Their Lord, Rubel Shelly; 20th Century Christian, 2809 Granny White Pike, Nashville, TN 37204; 145 pages, paper $3.95.

Here is one of the finest books on morality we have seen in our lifetime, and we are proud to commend it in the highest possible way. Perhaps no generation of young people has ever been faced with so many subtle and devious forms of temptation to sin as the current one is. They are growing up in a society that has abandoned objective moral standards. The prevailing philosophies teach them that each must determine his own values, too much of a job for anyone, much less youth. They thus need all the sound, solid, and Scriptural help they can get. And this book will bring them face to face with the problems, such as drinking, drugs, pornography, sex, racism, occults, etc., and provide them with Scriptural answers as to how to deal with them. While it is designed especially for Christian youth, everyone who is serious about sin and God's remedy for it will profit immensely by using it as a study tool. Personally we would like to see it placed in the hands of every young person, studied in every teen-age class, used widely by adults, and form the bases of a series of sermons preached throughout the land. If used properly, it can help us turn the tide from Satan-inspired immorality to the purity taught by the Son of God. This is a book no one can afford to miss.

All books reviewed here may be ordered from Carolina Christian Bookstore, P.O. Box 1219, Yadkinville, N.C. 27055.

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Letters To The Editor

Dear brother Winters:

Your editorial on Faith, Knowledge, and Opinion was excellent. Some have gotten carried away with logic and reason. I know the Bible is logical and reasonable but even books of logic and reason are not infallible. My conclusion should always be subject to further study. The Bible provides its own credibility which gives me assurance but this does not mean that my understanding is infallible. Some have carried absolute truth to the extreme as though absolute truth and man's assurance are the same. I do not question my faith but I am always subject to questions about it and realize that I can be wrong. I have never reached the place where I am unwilling to re-examine what I believe and I hope I never do. Keep up the good writing. — Franklin Camp, Birmingham, AL.

Wise words from a wise man who has a sincere heart, a boundless faith, a profound knowledge, a pure life, and a shining hope. We are thrilled beyond expression that such a man would so highly commend the words of one who is not even worthy to wash his feet.

Dear Howard:

I appreciate your courage to print articles that make each one of us think for ourselves. Though I have not always agreed with you on everything (especially Rom. 11), I have enjoyed reading your articles and discussing things with you because you are well read. The man who doesn't read others isn't himself worth reading (I believe Spurgeon said that). We need more articles which challenge us to think about Scripture, which help us to be better Christians, which promote Scriptural unity, and which motivate us to love and good works. Early Christians out thought the pagans. So must we. — T. Douglas Couch, Asheboro, NC

We have always been a people who freely discussed matters (differences very much included) in private study, in our homes, in Bible classes, in preachers' meetings, on lectureships, in religious journals, and, in fact, anywhere we can get together. Why has it suddenly become the mark of apostasy to discuss them in print now? Do we want a few to study for us and then tell us what to believe? If so, then we have a few who are more than willing to accommodate us. But when we do that we are as sure to be bound by a human creed as if we were already there. (As to brother Couch differing with us on Rom. 11, he has not yet read our new commentary on Romans. When he does, we see no way for the difference to continue. It puts further discussion beyond legitimacy. In fact, to differ with it may even become another mark of apostasy.)

Dear brother Winters:

I like the November issue of **Carolina Christian**, especially the editorials and the answer to brother Seamon. . . . I am looking forward to reading your *Commentary on Romans.* — Orlan Sawey, South Boston, VA

We hope a lot of others will want to read

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the *Commentary on Romans.* Getting it out is the largest (and most risky) undertaking in the history of Carolina Christian. Its failure could mean financial disaster.

Dear Howard:

I have continued appreciation for your good work. I look forward to seeing your new *Commentary on Romans.* — Burl Curtis, Searcy, AR

Carolina Christian owes its very life to Burl Curtis, who served as its editor for 12 years. While he has been gone from the Carolinas for 13 years, his influence is still strongly felt and he continues a lively interest in the paper (he sent a $100 contribution). He is a true friend and a devout servant of the Lord.

Dear Howard:

Here is another suggestion: A good way to increase the number receiving the magazine would be for each subscriber, and even those who do not subscribe, to make a voluntary contribution in mutiples of $5.50 and provide names for which the paper could be sent for a year. The contribution is tax deductible because made to a non-profit organization. By this means the circulation could be greatly increased with very little cost to any one individual. — Henry Fuhry, Swannanoa, NC

This is a tremendous idea. We hope many of you will take it to heart. Although our mailing permit limits us to 10 percent of the total paid subscriptions to be sent this way, this would give us a great thrust forward and many of those to whom the paper would be sent free for a year would then subscribe for themselves. Some, including such great men as Franklin Camp, have already done this.

Dear brother Winters:

It was good to finally meet you at the South Carolina Lectures in Georgetown. We are eager to host the lectures here at Myrtle Beach in 1986. I have enjoyed **Carolina Christian** since the first time I picked one up. It seemed good, therefore, to encourage the brethren here to subscribe as a club. Enclosed are the names of those who wish to subscribe. I trust that 1985 will be a good year for the paper. . . . Let me know if there is anything I can do to serve you. — Dillion C. Bayes, Myrtle Beach, SC

A club of 10 subscriptions was enclosed. Subscriptions are our survival insurance. We cannot live without them. We therefore urge more preachers to follow brother Bayes' example — encourage the brethen to subscribe as a club.

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 27, NO. 2, FEBRUARY 1985

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The Ferneyhoughs

(See Article On Page 19.)

EDITORIAL

Letters To The Seven Churches

Johnny Melton,* Statesville, NC

Concerning the seven churches addressed by Jesus in Revelation 2 and 3, William Milligan stated, "We are introduced to the Universal Church under the presentation given of seven Churches of Asia selected for that purpose. These Churches are so selected, that they present us with a picture of the various elements that make up the Church's life. We see her in herself and in her relation to the world; in her strength and weakness; in her steadfastness and in her declensions; in her prosperity and in her sufferings; in her outward poverty and in her true riches; in the distinction existing between the real and nominal followers of Christ within her borders; in the just indignation of her Supreme Head against the one, and in His leading the other to the full possession of His own triumph in the presence of His Father and their Father, of His God and their God."

Homer Hailey concluded, "A careful analysis of the letters leads us to the conclusion that all conditions ever to be found in a congregation of the Lord's church at any time in history may be found at least in principle, in one or more of the seven churches. This makes the letters practical and worthy of study for all time."

What does Christ think of the church? This question was raised by John R. W. Stott, and his answer is found in a little book on the letters to the seven churches entitled, **What Christ Thinks of the Church.** In his introduction, Stott observed, "(Christ) has a right to think and say what He does. In the first place, it is His church. He founded it on the rock and promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. He called it 'my church' (Matt. 16:18). He is its head and the source of its life. In the second place, He knows it intimately. In each of the seven letters He begins 'I know.' 'I know your works, your toil, your patient endurance,' He says. 'I know your tribulation and your poverty.' 'I know where you dwell.' 'I know . . . your love and service' (2:2, 9,13,19). He is walking among the lampstands, patrolling and supervising His churches. He is the chief pastor, the chief bishop. Then what is His view of the church? In each of the seven letters which follow, the risen Christ lays emphasis, either in rebuke or in commendation, on one particular characteristic of an ideal church. Put together these characteristics constitute the seven marks of a true and living church. They tell us what Christ thinks of His Church both as it is and as it should be." The key elements Stott enumerated were:

Ephesus: Love
Smyrna: Suffering
Pergamos: Truth
Thyatira: Holiness
Sardis: Reality
Philadelphia: Opportunity
Laodicea: Wholeheartedness

Even a casual observer can recognize that all is not well with the church today, but only a fool would contend that the problems we face are peculiar to our generation. As long as the church has contained men and women there have been problems to be handled. And

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Howard Winters, Editor; David Pharr, Carolina News Editor; Dennis Conner, Brotherhood News Editor, Johnny Melton, Carolina Pulpit Editor.

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since mankind has not changed fundamentally, each generation has had to deal with the same basic problems, To be sure, our problems today come disguised in various ways; but, in principle, they are no different from those faced by the churches Jesus addressed in Revelation 2 and 3.

It is our conviction that a careful study of the letters to the seven churches will encourage us in our efforts to serve Jesus. We need to be reminded that no church is without problems (even those two in which Jesus found nothing to condemn, Smyrna and Philadelphia, faced problems); and we need to be reminded that no church is without hope (even a dead church like Sardis, or a church about which nothing good could be said like Laodicea) as long as there are Christians meeting who are individually standing for truth and right and until **every** opportunity has been exhausted for the wayward to repent.

We should remind ourselves that none of the churches Jesus addressed had as yet lost its candlestick. If Jesus was still in fellowship with those churches, despite the compromise, both morally and doctrinally, that characterized most of them, then we can be assured that he is still in fellowship with most of our churches today. Assuredly, Jesus warned that He would not always tolerate the sins that beset those churches, they could lose their candlesticks. And churches today should recognize that compromise and indifference regarding either doctrinal or moral considerations will not always be tolerated. Churches can and do lose their candlesticks. However, we must be careful that we do not give up on people or churches before Jesus does. The letters to the seven churches demonstrate that Jesus had an enormous capacity for patience and understanding with the congregations of His people.

It is our hope that the articles in this special issue will help every saint to look into his own heart to determine where he stands in relationship with Christ and then that he will evaluate the local church of which he is a part and determine where improvements can be made. If the church is made stronger as a result of these investigations, then our efforts will be rewarded and our prayers answered.

**Guest editor*

The Church At Ephesus

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Imagine a doctor telling a patient: "You are a successful man. You have the appearance of good health. There is no malignancy. Obviously you have tried to protect yourself from disease. But there is one serious problem. You have heart trouble and unless you do something about it you will die."

Spiritually, such was the Great Physician's diagnosis of the church at Ephesus. They had all the outward signs of a healthy church. They had allowed no doctrinal cancer to enter. The church had a history of diligent work and had patiently endured. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

He which searcheth the reins and hearts (Rev. 2:23) saw that their hearts lacked the love which had once motivated their service. A specific definition of what is meant by "first love" is not given, but verse 5 shows that it had manifested itself in certain activities called "the first works." True love always shows itself in deeds (1 John 3:18). When the love cools the zeal disappears.

It must be remembered, however, that their failure is preceded by a remarkable list of commendations (vv. 2-3). There is special emphasis on their concern for doctrinal soundness. They were patient, but not with evil. There was no hint of compromise. Specific mention is made of their trying and exposing false apostles. This implies an examination of the teaching and practice of such imposters. In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Paul explains that false apostles would exhibit the appearance of being ministers of righteousness. False teachers (then and now) disguise themselves with pleasing personalities, with loving demeanor, and with impressive zeal. All should be tried by the standard of truth (1 John 4:1).

In verse 6, the Ephesian church is commended for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans. Whatever these deeds were they were contrary to the will of God. It is right to hate the things that God hates. The proper attitude toward truth and error is expressed in Psalm 119:128, "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."

Concern for soundness in doctrine, however, must not be a substitute for soundness of heart. The Ephesians had left their first love. Is it possible that they had become so obsessed with defending the faith that they had forgotten that love for God and man is the foundation of all truth? Could it be that they had found more satisfaction in exposing error than in winning converts? Had their zeal been reduced to mere concern for correct externals? Was the joy of salvation gone? Were they more enthusiastic for debate than revival? Or was it that they felt doctrinal purity was the only necessity of pure religion. See James 1:27.

The text does not, of course, give the specifics named above and they are suggested only as possibilities. They are, however, very real possibilities and churches today would do well to examine their own priorities. Is a congregation acceptable to the Lord simply because it is intolerant of error?

There is a proper, but sometimes extreme, emphasis in the modern church on doctrinal soundness. The threat of false teaching from both within and without demands constant vigilance and an uncompromising stance regarding the essentials of the faith. The example of the Ephesian church in this respect should be followed. They tried false teachers and exposed them. We must also mark (examine) those who promote false and divisive doctrines (Rom. 16:17-18). The integrity of New Testament Christianity must be maintained. But it is possible that some might be staunch defenders of the faith without having the kind of love that is the first essential of pleasing God.

When is a church of Christ no longer a church of Christ? The text demonstrates such a possibility. They were in danger of having their candlestick removed from its place, their history and soundness notwithstanding The church is supposed to be an extension of the heart, character and ministry of Jesus Himself. Love for the truth is much more than mere loyalty to certain ideas and expressions. Quoting Scripture without emulating Christ's character is empty rhetoric. What Christ in His fleshly body felt and did for suffering and lost humanity is what His spiritual body is supposed to be feeling and doing. When a church lacks this kind of love its service is only empty formality.

The shift in attention from the congregation in verses 1-6 to the individual in verse 7 shows that the only solution is personal revival. A church can be no stronger, no more compassionate, no more active and faithful than are the members themselves. A church loses its first love because individual Christians have left theirs. But those who overcome are promised the tree of life.

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The Church At Smyrna

Richard Parks, Lexington, SC

God Himself tells us that "no chastening for the present time seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." (Heb. 12:11.) The suffering saints in Smyrna were all too well acquainted with this fact of life. Yet, here was a church laboring and persevering in the face of intense persecution and suffering. The Lord's message to Smyrna is one of commendation and comfort. These saints were plagued with rejection, destitution, persecution, imprisonment and the constant threat of death. Do we wonder that some were likely to relinquish their hold on Christ? What comfort and strength the message of Christ must have brought His agonizing children. The Lord offers three assurances to the believers in Smyrna.

First, the Lord assures them that He knows their tribulation. Two simple words, "I know." Yet, these words remind the hearers that the Lord Jesus understands all about suffering because He has suffered. No believer will ever pass through any trial that his Savior has not already known. Every cup of anguish from which we must sip has already been wholly consumed by our Lord.

According to the Hebrew writer, Christ suffered as man — He endured all the anguish and pain of the human nature. The Christians in Smyrna could find reassurance in knowing that Christ is indeed "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" and allows us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15-16). Christ also suffered for man — He was "wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities," and "with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). He also suffered from man. According to Paul, this suffering is incomplete (Col. 1:24). Christ still suffers from man in the person of His followers. When we ache, grieve, suffer persecution, weep and cry out in anguish, Christ knows. He understands. He shares all of it with us.

Do we need this comfort and assurance any less today than did the believers in Smyrna? Seldom do any of us face the threat of physical harm for Christian living. To say, though, that we are not persecuted today would be preposterous. Shall we assume that Satan has slipped into dormancy, resting peacefully in satisfaction with his past track record? As surely as Satan and his emissaries were busy in Smyrna, they are busy in our churches today. Granted, the historical context is different, necessitating a different plan of attack, but Satan is versatile. Discouragement, disunity and doubt are some of his most powerful weapons. If ever he has persecuted the church using these, he does so today.

The saints in Smyrna are assured that the Lord has taken account of their labor in the midst of tribulation. "I know thy works" is pure praise for their steadfastness. How wonderful it would be for us to know confidently that this approbation is the Lord's message to our churches today. The very things that prompted that commendation still elicit the same praise from our Lord today. New hope and new life will come into our congregations when we, like Smyrna, glorify God in our suffering!

Secondly, Smyrna is assured that their poverty is only seeming, in view of the spiritual treasures they have claimed in Christ. "Thou art rich" depends on one's view or perspective on life. These Christians had been rejected by the world and ostracized from their communities. Family and friends had been quick to disassociate

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themselves from members of the "new cult." Jobs were lost when employers learned that they had openly confessed Jesus. They had become destitute, having no jobs and being unable to rely on family or friends for support. But they are rich, "having nothing and yet possessing all things." (2 Cor. 6:10.) They were given a new family by God, and added to a community of believers that had all things common. They may have been despised and shunned by the world, but God exalted them!

What a contrast with Laodicea! God told this church, "Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked." (Rev. 3:17.) The poor church God calls rich. The affluent church is actually in the depths of poverty. This is a message for the church of this generation. Great buildings, well-financed programs and enormous budgets mean little when the Spirit of God is absent from our congregations. The wealthiest churches may well be filled with spiritual paupers. Perhaps one of our greatest needs is for church leaders who can discern spiritual realities, men whose vision allows them to see the eternal, not just the earthly.

Finally, the Lord assures His beloved coworkers in Smyrna that the divine estimate exposes the false claims of men who profess to be His followers, and are not. Men of all generations have thought it possible to fool God, but the Lord knows those who are truly faithful to Him.

The Jewish element comprised a considerable segment of Smyrna's population. Though we are not given a full account of the work of these Jewish blasphemers, the identification of them as the "synagogue of Satan" suggests the vile and bitter nature of their slanderous accusations against the true saints. Is the church not plagued with the same today? Satan introduces his workers into every congregation where possible, and persecution often comes in the form of open assaults from within the Lord's body. All of which, of course, elates Satan and destroys unity and spiritual energy.

Until the day our Lord comes again, the tares will grow with the wheat. We dare not allow ourselves to become discouraged by the hypocrisy and blasphemous living of some who profess faith in Christ. Rather than become idle and develop a spirit of timidity in the presence of our enemies, we must abound in the work of the Lord. Above all, let us find assurance in God's message to Smyrna. Our Lord knows. He understands the contradicition of sinners, the pain and anguish that one's own brethren can cause, and the discouragement of trying to live for the Father with Satan ever present.

With confidence we can face the tribulation and pain dealt to us, knowing that for us the "second death has no power." (Rev. 20:6.) Our Lord promised the faithful ones in Smyrna, "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." He knows. It is quite significant that He identified Himself as the one who "was dead and is alive." (Rev.2:8.) If we overcome, we shall share in His resurrection!

The Church At Pergamos

Richard McWilliams, Charleston,SC

The ruins of Pergamos are located about seventy-five miles north of Smyrna and fifteen miles inland from the Agean Sea. Though it was not a commercial center, Pergamos had the splendor and importance that would come to a city that was both the Roman capital of the province of Asia and a flourishing cultural center. Part of the government and general culture of that day was idolatry. Emperor worship took on greater importance due to the governmental functions of the city. The worship of Aescalapius, god of healing, with its serpent emblem, was also prominent because of its related medical center. People traveled great distances to be treated there. There was also a great temple to Zeus (as well as other idol's temples). Thus the description of this city as the place "where Satan lives" and "where Satan's throne is" (2:13) was particularly fitting.

This church was blessed by a letter from the victorious Christ so powerfully pictured in Revelation 1:13-16. The sharp two-edged sword first shown in that picture again appears (2:12, 16) as the symbol of the Lord's word, powerful to accomplish His will, including the defeat of His enemies (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).

Christ's praise for this congregation centered in their loyalty to Him in the face of Satan arraying his power against them. Even at the death of one of the faithful ones, Antipas, they did not deny their confession that Christ is the Son of God (2:13). Their refusal to take part in the idolatry so prevalent in that city left them open to becoming not only outcasts, but victims of serious persecution. Faithfulness in these circumstances is certainly praiseworthy.

Yet there had developed a serious flaw in this church. They had come to have some who held to false teaching (2:14). The false teaching had led to sin in the form of eating things sacrificed to idols, and immorality (2:14). Eating things sacrificed to idols was necessary to a smooth relationship to the community and no doubt good for business. Immorality was part of the sensual religion of idolatry and naturally followed taking part in it. These false teachers in some was advocated that this evil behavior was permitted for Christians. This teaching and practice were bad enough, but there was missing from those who were not directly involved in the sin, "a hatred for the deeds of the Nicolaitans" (2:6) which the Ephesian Christians rightly maintained. As the Corinthians had tolerated fornication (1 Cor. 5), so these Christians had failed to practice the discipline needed in this case. They were too tolerant.

The solution was clear: repent (2:16). Those tolerant of false teachers, idolatry, and immorality needed godly sorrow leading to repentance, and then to practice the discipline needed. Those false teachers needed godly sorrow leading to repentance, and then to teach only God's word. Those involved in idolatry and immorality needed godly sorrow leading to repentance and then to pure lives. But it all hinged on the repentance of the overly tolerant ones.

Failure to repent would bring the attack of Christ (2:16). Repentance and overcoming would bring hidden manna, life from God, and a new name on a white stone (a symbol of victory in Christ.)

Can we fail to miss the point that God will not tolerate a church that tolerates false teaching and resulting sin? Sound doctrine is the basis of purity of life. Elders, evangelists, and teachers must ever be prepared to effectively uphold and present God's truth and refute false teaching. Proper discipline is vital to a healthy church. Failure to practice discipline as taught in the New Testament (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3; Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20) will lead to the destruction of the church, not by Satan, but by the Lord Himself. He will not tolerate those who trifle with His grace.

The Church At Thyatira

Ron Newberry, Greensboro, NC

Unlike the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7), who had lost her first love, the church at Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29) presents a picture of an active, growing, busy church. On the surface the practical expression of their love for God had grown (they were doing more than they did at first). Their faith, love and ministry had expanded. They were patient, perhaps too patient. The one "whose eyes are like flaming fire" had penetrated the surface. Like an x-ray he saw below the surface a cancer consuming the heart of the congregation.

There are numerous lessons that grow out of this passage that need the attention of the church in the twentieth century. This article focuses on one of these valuable lessons.

The brethren at Thyatira were known to the Lord to have patience (KJV), perseverance (NIV), patient endurance (RSV). While patience is a virtue to be cultivated (cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-7 "make every effort to add . . . perseverance") and while it is the result of our faith being tested that a mature and complete Christian is produced (James 1:3-4), it becomes sin when it degenerates into tolerance of sin. This tolerance was clearly not the kind of patience needed to bring one back to the Lord. It was as if they had closed their eyes to what they knew to be sin and refused to deal with it.

It is clear from the Lord's use of the singular pronoun "your" in reference to the church at Thyatira that He holds the church (collectively) responsible for the sin of not removing sin from the body. This implies that a cooperate response is expected from and needed by the body when dealing with sin in the church.

This attitude of God is not new. In Joshua 7 one man sinned by taking what was devoted to God (cf. Josh. 6:18-19). Achan took what had been devoted to God. One man sinned, but God said, "Israel has sinned." (Josh. 7:11.)

God held the church responsible for failing to deal with sin in the church. There was in Thyatira the equivalent of what was in ancient Israel at the "valley of disaster"; there was sin in the camp.

The answer to the question of "Why is this so serious?" has tremendous relevancy for today. Consider the following observations.

Sin is serious because, as noted above, one sinned but God held all Israel accountable. This undisclosed, unrepented of, undealt with sin contaminated the body. Sin in the body is serious because it hurts the innocent. In Joshua 7:5, 36 men died as the result of one man's sin. Later (Josh. 7:24) it cost the lives of Achan's family.

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Sin in the camp is serious because while it exists unattended and unresolved the body cannot stand against the enemy. Israel was routed by the enemy at Ai and God declared that they would not be able to stand against the enemy until it was removed (Josh. 7:12-13).

The church that refuses to deal with the Jezebels or any sin in the body will find itself with a loss of defense, credibility and strength. The promise of Philippians 4:13 ("I can do everything through him who gives me strength") is predicated on doing God's will. The promise of not being ineffective and unproductive is based on making every effort to add certain qualities to our lives (2 Pet. 1:5-8). Paul states clearly that some at Corinth were weak and sick because they had abused the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:30). That is just another example of what can happen when sin goes unchecked in the body.

One major difference between the church and the world is not that we do not sin, but that the church constantly deals with sin. The promise of cleansing in 1 John 1 is given to those who deal with sin and not to those who tolerate it. We should never confuse grace with tolerance.

Sin is serious and must be dealt with because it has a permeating effect. It is like yeast that eventually "works through the whole batch of dough" (1 Cor. 5:6). Paul's remedy was to rid the body of the leavening agent (1 Cor. 5:7).

The common rebuttal is, "We cannot judge another! Jesus said, 'Judge not that ye be not judged.' After all, we're all sinners." That "argument" simply ignores the facts. Jesus speaks in Matthew 7:1 of "prejudging," not the legitimate weighing of the facts. Futhermore, it ignores what Paul plainly teaches in 1 Corinthians 5:12-13. The rhetorical question in verse 12 implies they (the church at Corinth) were to judge those inside the church. They were to expel the wicked man from among them (v. 13).

The mandate is clear. While the church is to be patient with everyone (1 Thess. 5:14);

its elders are to be men of patience (1 Tim. 3:3); its ministers are to pursue patience (1 Tim. 6:11); there comes the time when patience ferments into tolerance and the virtue becomes a vice.

When is that line crossed? God stated that He had given Jezebel time to repent (Rev. 2:21), but she was unwilling. Two things are evident in that statement. Time to repent needs to be given, but there comes the time when that time is over. Secondly, there must be a willingness on the part of the sinner in the body to repent. When all efforts to restore are exhausted and there is no attitude or willingness to repent, there is no alternative but to become intolerant of the sin.

Of all the lessons contained in this letter to the church at Thyatira, none seems to be more needed in the church today than that of learning to come to grips with sin in the body. A congregation may be on the move. It may be famous for its great deeds. Its love and faith and service may produce an exalted reputation. Yet, it may tolerate sin and be consumed. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

The Church At Sardis

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

The epistle to the church in Sardis was addressed to a church that in many ways had become like the city by which it was surrounded. Sardis at one time had been a city of glory and prosperity. It had been the residence of King Croesus, one of the richest men of ancient history, and was the capital of old Lydia. But now its glory had faded and the city was decaying. On two occasions in the past the city, thought by its citizens to be impregnable because of its location on Mt. Tmolus, had fallen to invaders through her own complacency. In A. D. 17 the city was destroyed by an earthquake, but even though it was rebuilt with the aid of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, Sardis never regained the former glory. Sardis was dying. So was the church. R. H. Charles has observed, "Like the city itself, the church had belied its early promise. Its religious history . . . belonged to the past."

This epistle contains an unusually strong rebuke of the church in Sardis, as evidenced by the reversal of the general pattern of the other epistles. The typical order of the epistles to those churches with which Christ had a complaint was first commendation, and then condemnation. Here it is just the opposite. The rebuke centers in the reputation the church had acquired with men, "I know thy works, that thou has a name that thou livest, and thou art dead" (ASV). Sardis had a name, or reputation, as a live church. Those looking on from the outside saw all the activity, the forms, the ceremonies and concluded that the church in Sardis was alive and well. Oh that it were so. Instead, Sardis serves as an ugly reminder that "Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). Christ looked beneath the surface and saw that there was activity, but no conviction. He saw that they had all the forms and ceremonies, but not the power. There is no hint of any opposition to the church from without. Why whould there be? She was not alive enough to bother anybody. Sardis was a whited sepulchre full of dead men's bones. Beneath the shiny exterior was the stench of death and decay.

The real tragedy is that Sardis is a prototype of many modern churches. Honesty compels us to admit that Jesus' rebuke of this church could just as easily be directed to many churches among us today. How many of our congregations today confuse activity with spirituality? How many are filled with people who honor God with their lips, but their heart is far from Him? How many begin numerous commendable works, but never see them through to completion? When Christ condemns Sardis, is He condemning us?

Is there anything that can be done for

such a church? In Jesus' mind there is. Such a condition need not be final and irreversible. The remedy is prescribed in the form of a warning containing two fundamental commands. First, "Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die . . . ." It was time for Sardis to awaken from her deadly slumber and build up the bit of life that remained. Failure to do so would result in the outpouring of Christ's judgement upon the church, "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Second, "Remember therefore how thou has received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent." The thought here is that past history can challenge us to present endeavor. Instead of resting on her laurels, Sardis is told to **be** what she had once been. Remembrance can be a powerful motive for repentance.

The commendation section of the epistle is directed to the few names in Sardis "that did not defile their garments." Even in bad churches there may be good people who have not succumbed to the deadly practices and attitudes of the majority. There are two rewards promised to those who overcome. First, they would wear white, "and they shall walk with me in white." The white clothing is a symbol of the purity and fellowship with Christ that would be enjoyed in heaven. Second, they would be remembered by the Lord, "and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Behind the symbol of the book of life is a wonderful truth. God remembers those who faithfully serve Him. Furthermore, the one who overcomes will be acknowledged before God by Christ Himself. In these rewards we find strong incentives to be the conquerors instead of the conquered.

Do you find yourself serving in a dead church today? If so, be faithful and keep working. You may be the key to revival. But what if the church dies in spite of your efforts? You will still be eternally blessed by the Lord.

May we all have ears to hear.

The Church At Philadelphia

Wayne Hendrix, Mocksville, NC

The Lord's message to the church at Philadelphia is one of optimism and opportunity. If the letters to the seven churches of Asia were likened to employee performance evaluations, I would be most pleased to be represented by Philadelphia. Very rare indeed is any evaluation in which **nothing** negative is said. None the less, Philadelphia, unlike her colleagues, received no condemnation. What she did receive was an opportunity for greater service. A door had been opened for her which no one could shut! "Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name." (Rev. 3:8, NASB.)

The concept of the "open door" is used several times in the Bible with reference to evangelistic opportunities (1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3 and Acts 14:27). The Philadelphians were being rewarded for their faithfulness to the cause of Christ with the opportunity to increase the boarders of the Kingdom. These Christians had been faithful with little, therefore, in harmony with the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), they were rewarded with more. "For to everyone who has [e. g. 'a little power'] shall more be given [e. g. 'an open door'], and he shall have an abundance . . ." (Matt. 25:30.) What an opportunity! What a compliment!

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What a challenge! Wouldn't it be great to be a part of a congregation with such potential? I am. You are too! Philadelphia's opportunity is our opportunity, Philadelphia's challenge is our challenge.

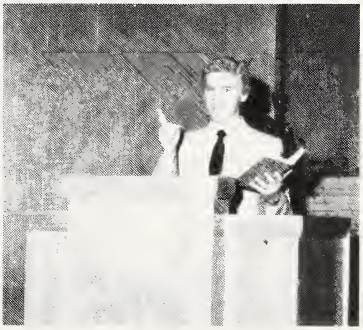
We Have The Same Lord

The Lord identifies Himself to the church at Philadelphia as, "He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens." He has authority and power now as He did then — "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever." (Heb. 13:8.) We do not have a limited Lord. It is His will that doors be opened, that is why He died. He is not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

Our Lord is a knowledgeable Lord. "I know your deeds" preceeds the promise of the open door. The opportunity given the church at Philadelphia was based on the Lord's knowledge that they had a little power, had kept His word and had not denied Him. The Lord gives oportunities based on ablilties (Matt. 25:15). Abilities increase with use; they are taken away when not used. The Lord knows how we use the abilities and opportunities we have. We may fool others, but He knows! Why should He open other doors for us if we will not go through the ones already open.

We Have The Same Power

I am encouraged that the Lord gave the "open door" opportunity to a church with a **little** power. Perhaps they were few in number, poor, and/or relatively young in the Faith. There could be many reasons for such an identification. Regardless of its size, location, economic situation, facilities, preacher, or size of the staff, every church has **some** power. It may be a family meeting in their home, or several families meeting in a store front, or it may be a congregation of 2,000 complacent, lukewarm Christians satisfied just "keeping house" — whatever the situa-



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tion might be, wherever God's people meet there is **some** power! It was from weakness that the ancient heroes of faith were made strong (Heb. 11:34). Paul understood that what appeared as weakness served to give strength (2 Cor. 12:10). The one talent slave had **some** ability. His problem is often ours, he failed to use his ability.

She had just come from Mexico to be with her husband while he was working with the Mexican exhibit during the 1982 World's Fair. It was not with an "uptown" congregation that she happened to visit one Sunday evening with her three young children, it was a rural congregation of 60-70 people within walking distance of the low-income trailer court where they lived. She knew almost no English. One member knew a **little** Spanish, enough to invite her in and make her feel welcome. Smiles, hugs, and genuine caring are universal language skills and she got lots of these from many of the menbers. Some of the members saw to it that a study was arranged with a member from another congregation who could speak Spanish fluently. She became a Christian and soon moved back to Mexico. A small congregation used a little power (and a lot of "all they could do") and a door was opened to Mexico for them. We all have some power!

We Must Remain Faithful

The church at Philadelphia was a faithful church. Speaking to them the Lord said, "You . . . have kept My word and have not denied My name." This faithfulness had been manifeasted during a time calling for perseverence (v. 10). The opportunity and challenge of an open door calls for faithfulness. "Well done good and **faithful** slave; you were **faithful** with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things." (Matt. 25:21, 23.) Once the faithful are given opportunities they must remain faithful **in** taking advantage of the opportunity and **while** taking advantage of the opportunity. An open door is no better than a closed door unless we use it. But failure to take advantage of an opportunity is not the only way to misuse an opportunity. The five talent slave would not have been faithful had he made proper investment only to embezzle some or all of the profits. Our opportunities must be carried out in a way that is in harmony with our Master's will. If we take advantage of an opportunity to evangelize a nation or a person and convert them to someone or something other than Christ we are no better than the scribes and Pharisees to whom Jesus said, "Woe to you . . . because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." (Matt. 23:15.) We must be faithful to the Lord and His word!

Philadelphia's challenge, the challenge of the open door, is our challenge. We have the same Lord who wants His good news spread and has the power to open doors. We have some power which when used is multiplied. Let us be faithful with the opportunities we have and rise to each new challenge of an open door.

The Church At Laodicea

Silas H. Shotwell, Charlotte, NC

None of the seven churches of Asia is better known to us than the church at Laodicea. The very name "Laodicea" has become a byword for "lukewarmness" as surely as "Corinth" symbolizes carnality and "Rome" reminds us of corruption.

And yet Laodicea was a beautiful city. It was a cultural center, a retirement place for the wealthy, a healthful place that was known for its medical facilities and good doctors. It must have been an exciting time when the church was established there and opportunities were seen for the expansion of

God's kindgom. How could the church there degenerate into one that God was so disgusted with that He threatened to "spit it out of His mouth"? (Rev. 3:16.)

Perhaps a key to the developing problem in Laodicea comes from their history. In A. D. 60 there was a severe earthquake that leveled the town. Offers from help came from far and near but the people of Laodicea were so independent and self-sufficient that they refused help from Rome or any other city, and rebuilt with their own resources. That reminds us of Revelation 3:17-18, when the Lord said to the Laodicean congregation, "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked."

Can the message of the Laodicean church be a warning against self-sufficiency? Could the modern-day "virtues" of "caution," "good business," "level-headedness," "conservatism" (as we call them), be truly labeled **lukewarmness?**

One of the most severe charges made against the modern church is that we are irrelevant, and ineffective. Even the severest critics of the early church could not make those charges. We are suffering an effectiveness crisis. We have become so program-oriented that we do not see men's true needs and often do not hear the word of God either.

I believe the Laodicean letter is for our time more than any of the seven. I believe that we have sometimes "imitated" New Testament Christianity more than we have "restored" it. To restore it would be to have **power.** We need to be a formidable, revolutionary, conquering, moral force for God against Satan. The fields are still "white until harvest" but the grainaries are not filled. We have better harvesting equipment, have tried many things to mobilize workmen, but the harvest is waiting. I believe it is because our self-sufficiency has made us lukewarm.

How many in your congregation feel confident in sharing their faith?

How many read their Bibles daily?

How many pray as families on a regular basis?

How many get with other Christians outside the formal worship services?

How many feed the hungry, counsel the confused, visit the imprisoned, etc.?

These questions may hurt, but they are better to be asked by us now, than to be asked by the Lord at His coming (Luke 12:35-49).

The problem is real, and the solutions need to be real. It will do little good to simply scorch people from the pulpit. It will do little good to hire a new minister of involvement, begin new programs, or add on to the building. In fact, that kind of thinking may be the Laodicean problem. We have depended so much on easy answers and new programs that we have become lukewarm toward the world's needs and toward God's will.

There must still be hope, or else the Lord would have already returned. There are people who will still respond to the gospel, and there are Christians who will still rely on the Lord. But we must repent. We must confess. We must pray. We must humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord. Only He is powerful enough to give us the strength that we need.

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BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Ethiopian Relief Fund

The famine in Ethiopia has resulted in an unprecedented response from churches of Christ around the world. By year's end, money collected for the relief project amounted to approximately $3 million, with as much as $300,000.00 per day coming in at the December peak. The project coordinators are the Central church of Christ in Stockton, Calif., the White's Ferry Road church of Christ in West Monroe, La., Bread For A Hungry World, and Manna International.

Unexpectedly heavy giving has come from churches in the northwestern and northeastern states and from churches in Japan, Korea, Virgin Islands, England, Canada, the Netherlands, and Puerto Rico. Christian colleges across the nation have also become involved in fund-raising projects. Total giving for the famine relief is expected to top $4 million.

Progress Is Slow In Pakistan

Siaikot, Pakistan. According to Hadayat Din, a native Pakistani evangelist, Christians in this Muslim country must work at a lower rate of pay, cannot hold key positions, have limited access to higher education at colleges and universities, and face many other restrictions of freedom of thought and religion. Christian preachers are forbidden to teach on radio or television. The country is 97% Muslim, so religious and political advantages go to the Muslims. The study of Islam is compulsory in public schools. These are the kind of barriers the church must face in Pakistan, said Din.

Din himself experienced rejection by his family members after he became a Christian, but has not converted his wife and two married children. He has also been responsible for establishing five small churches in Sialkot that meet in the homes of Christians. Din has taught and baptized 300 people, with 50% of them remaining faithful. His work in Pakistan has been sponsored by the North Central church of Christ in Bloomington, Indiana. Din was converted there while working on a doctorate in education at the University of Indiana.

OCC Debaters Nationally Ranked

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. According to the Cross Examination Debate Association standings released in October, the forensics team from Oklahoma Christian College was ranked third in the nation behind UCLA and Weber State University. In 1983 the team ranked 43rd in the nation.

Since August of 1984 the team had won 28 trophies in six tournaments and had a win/loss record of 94-33.

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Letters To The Editor

Dear Howard:

Put me down for four copies of your **Commentary on Romans.** Check is enclosed. You did a great job in 1984. Keep it up. — Bill G. Smith, Greenville S.C.

No one, not even the editor himself, has been a more tireless worker for Carolina Christian than Bill Smith and his lovely wife, Kay. Only eternity can reward them for all the work they have done. But all of us need to be grateful for them . . . and for their devotion to the paper.

Dear Howard:

Just a note of congratulations on reaching 56! The comments and observations in the December issue of **Carolina Christian** are all so very appropriate and have all, and much more, occurred to me many times. Just suppose that you were 72 instead of 56 and these thoughts and visions were 16 years older and as time had gone on you remained conscientious and these things had become more and more pressing, often causing many depressing frustrations, what then? But it seems that there is always something that occurs which lifts one out of the depths and brings rays of renewed hope and strength. I have summed up my philosophy in two words: "He tried."

If I can truly say this then I can rest more and do more and stay refreshed. As it is right now I have a better outlook and more anticipation than I have ever had, yet I know that I cannot have many more years to walk this earth and yet I accept the limitation and narrowing of life as something God has in His plan. I do not resist it or fight it. I can see more and more the truth in Jesus' comment in John 12:24. I combine this in my own thoughts with Paul's in 1 Corinthians 3:6 and realize that God did not intend that I should be **the** one to get it all done. I thus make myself a little more content.

I, too, look back. When I recall the scene in the Carolinas in 1946 (the year brother Franks moved to the Carolinas, Ed) and compare it to today it is absolutely amazing. It was so discouraging then and when we could drive 100 or 200 miles to visit a gospel meeting it seemingly refreshed us for six months. Even the word enormous does not do justice to the change that has occurred in these 38 years. One who was not here in those days can only imagine what it was like.

I just felt like commenting a little bit. Keep on viewing, dreaming, figuring, calculating, trying, and praying and a great change will yet be seen. You have the brain, the capacity, the knowledge to carry on in an excellent fashion and I know you will. Again, I have to admire you so greatly for you, yourself, have blossomed more during these years than even the work of the Carolinas has. You have done it yourself and can even congratulate yourself. The very best to you and yours onward. — C. R. Franks, Elizabethtown, N.C.

This letter is longer than we ordinarily use, and it contains some personal reference to the editor that we would ordinarily cut out, but out of respect to the author we did not dare lay our hands on it (other than to make a few editorial changes). We have known and loved brother Franks for many years. He has spent more than 30 years working in the Carolinas, which gives him the longest tenure of anyone known to us. Because of the time element and the vast amount of work he has done he deserves far more recognition than he has received, and it is to our shame that his declining years have brought so much frustration (in regard to recognition, support, and provision for opportunities to do a useful work). Such should not be permitted among the people of God.

Howard:

I hope the enclosed picture will be sufficient. Shirley battled cancer for 26 months, but continued to attend services and teach classes until her last three months. She truly showed the power of God in her life, and even more so in her trials! A tribute to her will glorify the God she loved and served. I know hundreds of people who knew her will appreciate it. — Dave Ferneyhough, Georgetown, SC.

Our hearts are deeply touch by the untimely death of this devoted Christian woman, wife, and mother. May the sweet memories of her help promote the truth of the gospel which she believed, loved, and obeyed. Our sympathies are with Dave and the children in their great loss.

Dear brother Winters:

The ministry of **Carolina Christian** is one of teaching and sharing. Certainly the articles contain the gospel, but the opportunity to hear the minds of the leaders of the church in the Carolinas is the unique ministry of the paper. We wish to express our appreciation for the persistent hard work and dedication that you and others who assist in producing this excellent publication are continuing to give for the growth of the church. We here in Orangeburg have been strengthened by being able to read about the progress and activities of other congregations. In 1985 we hope to improve our own efforts to share what we are doing. . . . We are grateful to be able to report that in Orangeburg eight people were baptized into Christ in 1984. Please begin sending us a bundle of 25 monthly. — Robert Hawks, Orangeburg, SC

Beautiful — expecially that order for a bundle of 25 each month. No region in our brotherhood has a more useful (or attractive) medium of exchange than the Carolinas have in this paper. We have a choice: we must either use it or lose it.

Sin Is So Degrading

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

Jesus told the story of the prodigal son. Yes, it is something that could have happened, but it is only a story. Yes, in likeness, it is something that does happen. It happens whenever a Christian turns back to the world. Because this particular one did not happen. Because it is a story, Jesus put the prodigal in the pigpen (Luke 15:13-15).

His audience was Jewish, those who religiously and personally hated, and despised, those swine. They would have nothing to do with them! That was their thinking and disposition after generations of breeding. But the prodigal was in a desperate way. He was willing to compromise himself and defile his conscience, to degrade himself that he might have what he thought he needed. This is the condition of sin; it is so degrading!

Why? I believe Jesus gives us two reasons. (1) The prodigal turned from God. When anyone turns from the only source of his true dignity, he falls into the only condition he has to turn to. He lowers himself to indignity and degradation. (2) The prodigal became a slave. Because it is the only alternative when God is left behind, you will become a slave to sin.

But you can break the chains of that slavery (Luke 15:17-24). God wants to save and receive those who would repent to be saved. His love has given us all a way to be freed from our slavery and humiliation if we would only walk away from that sin.

It is Jesus Christ (Luke 15:2). Yes, we need Jesus to eat with the publicans and sinners to teach us that God is not ashamed of any of His penitent children. Will you repent? Leave your unfaithfulness and return to God the Father.

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Good Christians But Bad Fathers

T. Douglas Couch, Asheboro, NC

Lot barely escaped the holocaust which destroyed Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim (Deut. 29:23). Losing his wife and married daughters in the escape, Lot and his two virgin daughters (Gen. 19:15) took permanent residence in a mountain cave near Zoar. Isolated, Lot's daughters felt they would never marry, bear children, nor perserve the family name. They intoxicated their father, clouded his moral judgement, and in his drunken state they had intercourse with him. Both conceived. Lot then became the father of his own grandsons! How could a father allow this to happen?

Lot was a righteous man (2 Pet. 2:7-8). However, this good man made some poor choices. Prior to "fire and brimstone" Lot chose Sodom (for financial reasons) as the place where he would work and raise his family. At least two of his daughters married hometown boys from Sodom (Gen. 19:14). They would perish in the destruction with their husbands. Mrs. Lot lives on in infamy as the "pillar of salt." So at least five family members perished because of Lot's chouce. His two virgin daughters sinned indirectly as a result of "Dad's decision." Prosperous Sodem was an expensive choice indeed.

Many fathers today have made a decision to live in Sodom. Some are righteous men as Lot was. But they may, as Lot did, live to regret their move. Some fathers are so caught up in making money they have become a stranger in their own house. Other fathers have allowed their children to make decisions on the basis of popularity alone. The best of men, even as Lot, err in their judgement.

Parenting is a rewarding but difficult task. We want our children to make the right choices. Our hearts are grieved when they do not. However, let us make sure that we do not place our children in a Sodom-type environment. Only harm can result to their souls. You cannot come out of Sodom untouched!

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Carolina Church News

NEWS BRIEFS

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

NORTH CAROLINA

Roanoke Rapids. Alan Smith has been selected as the new preacher. Alan has been with the church in Bassett, Virginia.

Raleigh. Mike Dublin is now working as an additional full-time minister at Brooks Avenue.

N. C. Baptisms

Asheboro, 1; Hendersonville, 2; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 5; Fayetteville, 1; Friendly Ave., Greensboro, 20; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 1; Roosevelt Dr., Jacksonville, 1. Total: 31.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Lancaster. The brethren have 84 copies of **Christian Hymns III** to give to a congregation which needs them. Call Wayne Walton, (803) 285-2977.

Summerville. Wayne Ford is now working as a part-time youth minister. He is also in the Navy. Wayne is a graduate of Sunset School of Preaching.

S. C. Baptisms

Lexington, 1; North Charleston, 1; West Columbia, 1; Summerville, 3; Edgewood, Greenville, 1; Northeast, Greenville, 2; Duncan, 1; Essex Village, 1. Total: 11.

Brewer Road, Winston-Salem

BILL ORCHARD-HAYES, Reporting: The Brewer Road church is happy to anouce that it has secured the services of Jim Gardner for the week of March 17-21 to deliver a series of lessons to the church on the subject of unity. The seven expositions will be taken from Ephesians 4 and will deal with each of the "ones" listed in the text, which are essential to unity. Jim Gardner, a canidate for Juris Doctorate Degree from Yale University and former minister for Brewer Road, is well known in this area for his ability to expound on the Scriptures. For more information call (919) 784-0663 or 768-4721.

Friendly Avenue, Greensboro

RON NEWBERRY, Reporting: Our work at Friendly Avenue continues to progress. As of this writing, we have baptized twenty since the first of November. All of these conversions were from outside the families of members of the congregation.

In addition to our strong campus and young adult evangelistic work, the elders have sought God's blessings on a new work on a scale unseen in this area. By July 1, 1985 we will have added a new staff member. His name is Vic Adams from Evansville, Indiana. Brothers Adams will work exclusively with the deaf.

It is our goal to grow the strongest deaf work in the country right here in Greensboro, North Carolina. Friendly Avenue will be the center of this work fully supported by this congregation.

Years of trying to create interest in and support for this work have been frustrating to those who see the need and potential of such a work. Those frustrations ended recently with the decision of the elders at Friendly Avenue to oversee and fully support this outreach to the deaf.

They solicit the prayers of every Christian as they step out as men of faith and leadership. If the Lord wills it to be successful, then it will succeed. If He doesn't, nothing we do will make any difference. We believe He has been waiting for men of faith to let Him make it succeed. May His great name be glorified and His kingdon increase daily.

North Charleston

MARGERY AUSTIN, Reporting: The State-Wide Bible Bowl for 1985 will be held at North Charleston congregation on Saturday, March 23. It will begin at 10:00 A.M. and continue until approximately 4:00 P.M.

The book(s) to be covered in the competition will be announced around February 1, 1985. We hope to have a teenage competition and an adult competition. It will consist of teams up to four people each. A congregation may have as many teams as they desire. Lunch will be provided by the North Charleston congregation on the 23rd of March for those attending the competition. Anyone desiring more information may contact Faires Austin at North Charleston (553-4963).

Churches of Christ in the Carolinas have been contributing to relief efforts for the hungry people of Ethiopia. Brethren over the United States have raised millions in recent months since the tragic famine in Ethiopia has become generally known. Responding to appeals from Whites Ferry Road church in West Monroe, Louisiana and other sponsoring congregations, many congregations in both Carolinas have sent contributions.

It is encouraging to see so many churches involved. Many of the places mentioned below are small and may be on the receiving end of mission efforts. Still they have seen a need and have decided to become involved. This should impress us that Christians in the states of North and South Carolina have the potential, through cooperative efforts, to support many good works. To God be the glory.

The list below is incomplete. We heard indirectly of others, but were unable to get specific figures. We will publish additional information as it is received.

North Carolina contributing churches are: Wilkesboro, 750; Brevard, 500; W. Jefferson, 400; Pine Valley, Wilmington, 2085; Shelby, 1600; Gastonia, 2469.79; Eastchester, High Point, 1,637.38; Cole Mill Road, Durham, 2170; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 7,121; Morganton, 2,546; Lumberton, 350; Roosevelt Dr., Jacksonville, 710; Albemarle, 328.75; Triangle Park, Chapel Hill, 1075; Archdale, Charlotte, 3,851.25; Aberdeen, 100; Highland Acres, Statesville, 1,000; Washington, 400; Jericho, Mocksville, 2,700; Spring Lake, 330; Mt. Airy, 100; Warners Chapel, Clemmons, 3,000; Yadkinville, 250; Abilene, Statesville, 1,423. The total for North Carolina, $36,897.11.

South Carolina contributing churches are: West Columbia, 1,265; Lexington, 500; Barnwell, 200; Union, 680.20; Myrtle Beach, 1,395; Williston, 240; Clifton St., Greenwood, 715; Summerville, 2,440.76; Clinton, 500; St. Andrews Rd., Columbia 1,000; Gregg Ave., Florence, 1,467; Belvedere, 680; Marion Ave., Gaffney, 1,000; Crawford Rd., Rock Hill, 670; Sigsby Road, Spartanburg, 1067; Winnsboro, 422; Lancaster, 1,100.76; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill 6,550. Total for South Carolina, $21,892.72.

Shirley Ferneyhough

Richard McWilliams, Charleston,SC

Shirley Mitchell Ferneyhough, 39, wife of David Ferneyhough, minister of the Georgetown (SC) Church of Christ, died December 15, 1984, in a Georgetown, SC, hospital after a lengthy illness.

Shirley was a faithful Christian who supported her husband in every way in his work as a gospel preacher. She was not only supportive of him during his training at East Tennessee School of Preaching, but she also served as church secretary and Bible class teacher where he has preached.

She is survived by her parents of Charlottesville, Virginia; her husband; a son, Jeffrey; a daughter, Teresa; a foster son, Kenneth; a brother and two sisters.

Funeral services were held at the church building in Georgetown on December 18, 1984, and burial followed at the Pennyroyal Memorial Gardens.

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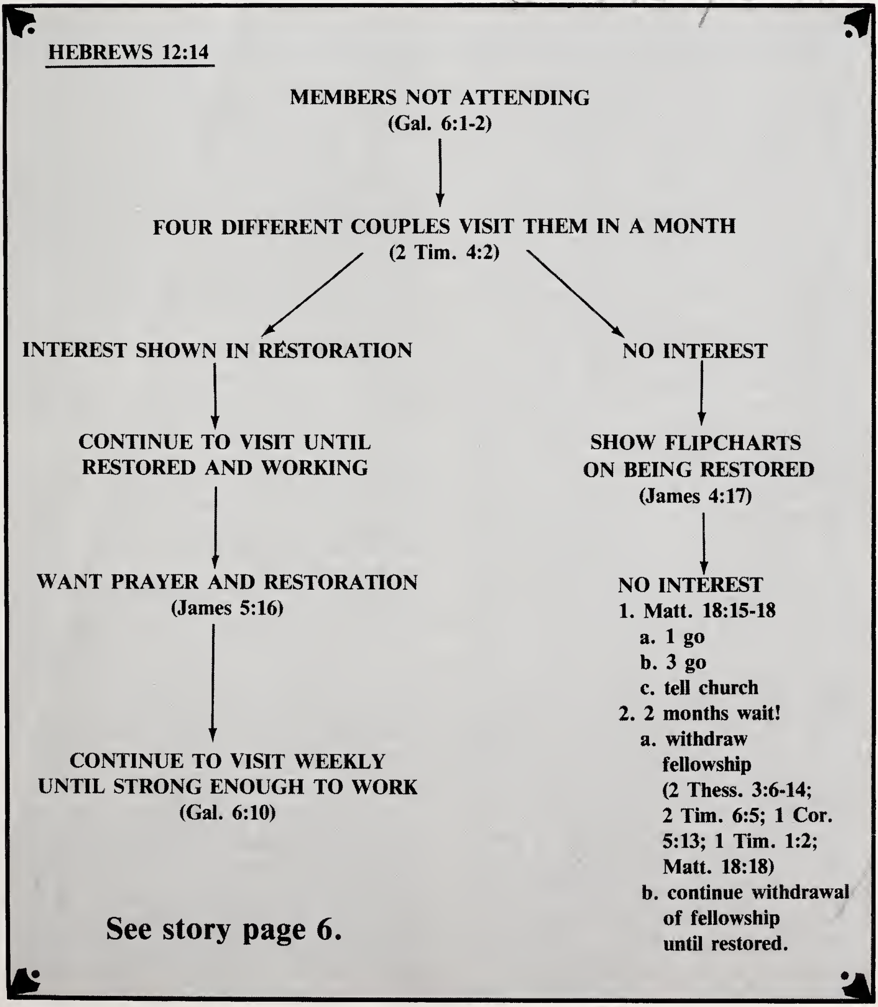

HEBREWS 12:14

MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING
(Gal. 6:1-2)

FOUR DIFFERENT COUPLES VISIT THEM IN A MONTH
(2 Tim. 4:2)

INTEREST SHOWN IN RESTORATION

CONTINUE TO VISIT UNTIL
RESTORED AND WORKING

WANT PRAYER AND RESTORATION
(James 5:16)

CONTINUE TO VISIT WEEKLY
UNTIL STRONG ENOUGH TO WORK
(Gal. 6:10)

NO INTEREST

SHOW FLIPCHARTS
ON BEING RESTORED
(James 4:17)

NO INTEREST

1. Matt. 18:15-18
   a. 1 go
   b. 3 go
   c. tell church
2. 2 months wait!
   a. withdraw fellowship (2 Thess. 3:6-14; 2 Tim. 6:5; 1 Cor. 5:13; 1 Tim. 1:2; Matt. 18:18)
   b. continue withdrawal of fellowship until restored.

See story page 6.

A CAUSE OF DIVISION

There are many causes of division (some of which we are aware of and we constantly warn against their danger) among the people of God, but not the least among them (and one that is often overlooked or ignored) is the selfish desire of each of us to have his own way in everything. This is manifest in a thirst for power, the desire to rule, the disposition to settle all matters one's own way. It is further seen in the will to force upon all others one's own will, the arrogant attitude that knows no submission except in others, the logic that binds one's own logic, the opinion that one's opinions are in reality matters of faith, the binding of what one considers reasonable conclusions (conclusion not specifically, implicitly or explicitly, taught in the Scriptures), the forcing of one's faith upon the conscience of another, etc. These are the symptoms of the disposition which often alienates and divides.

If one studies seriously the concepts of restoration leaders he cannot help but see that their disposition was to reconcile rather than alienate. They said, in essence, "Let us hold nothing as a matter of faith nor carry out any practice, regardless of how fond we may be of its personally, that is not clearly a 'thus saith the Lord.' If the word of God does not teach it, we will not practice it for the sake of peace and unity. Unity among brethren is more important to us than the practice of our own opinions." As Paul was willing to do in the case of his liberty to eat meat (1 Cor. 8:13), they were willing to do (at least in theory) in any matter which did not involve a divinely revealed truth in order to have a united church. This is simply to say that they were willing to surrender their liberties if and when the practice of their liberties got in the way of peace. Paul said, " . . . whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31.) His point is that eating meat when it violated a brothers conscience could not be done to the glory to God. Of course it was not wrong to eat the meat **per se,** but it was wrong to disrespect and and trample under foot the conscience of another. And one could not glorify God by doing so. In this instance, therefore, one could not glorify God without surrendering his personal liberties for the good of his brother. This is a great principle that the early leaders of the restoration movement understood far better than we do today. No man can cause division in a church of Christ (on any matter that is not essential to the salvation of souls) to the glory of God. Wherever there is division there is sin. Thus when we cause division by the forcing of a selfish disposition, we sin. There is no ifs, ands, and buts about it.

But on the other hand, if we will develop the unselfish attitude or disposition of surrendering all that is not specifically taught in the divine word, and receive all as brethren who do the same, not to doubtful disputations (Rom. 14:1), not for the purpose of judging or forcing on them correction, but with a mutual and honest effort to practice the Bible in every essential particular, to preach the gospel and save the lost, unity will prevail. How could it be otherwise?

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

Howard Winters, Editor; David Pharr, Carolina News Editor; Dennis Conner, Brotherhood News Editor, Johnny Melton, Carolina Pulpit Editor.

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The quickest way to divide the body of Christ is for any of us to set ourselves up as judge and jury on the correctness of every church and individual, on the "soundness" of every man and action, on the acceptability for fellowship of everyone the world over who has obeyed the gospel, and on the degree of error one may hold or practice and still be recognized as a child of God. In short, to have unity we must recognize that God is the judge, and (in the sense we are here using the term), He has not committed that prerogative to us.

Of course each of us must go about doing the right as God gives him the vision to see the right, teaching others to do right as He has revealed the right, and in the spirit of meekness and fear study the Bible together to determine what is right. When we all have the disposition to do right, as it is revealed in the Bible, unity will be a reality. But unity can never prevail as long as we arrogantly and selfishly demand that every man's conscience must bow in humble submission to our own faith and knowledge. It is a sad day in the church of our blessed Lord when Christians cannot meet with anyone, regardless of their belief or practice, and with mutual respect mutually study the revelation of God's divine will for all men.

GOD CREATED

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1.) The whole Bible is built upon the foundation of this one verse. Remove it (that is the concepts of God and creation) and the whole structure falls. It should be profitable then to take a look at it and see some of the consequences of rejecting or accepting it.

The verse itself says: "In the beginning" – the beginning of time, of created things; not the beginning of God or eternity: for neither had a beginning. "God" – the all-powerful self existent one. "Created" – brought into existence that which had no previous existence by His almighty power. From His own resources, and from His own power, He spoke and it was done. By His creative act being sprang from non-being; material from non-material; life from non-life. "The heaven" – probably the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, stars, and planets, sprinkled throughout seemingly endless space. "And the earth" – the world and all things therein, including man. This verse thus depicts God as the originator, source, and creator of all things. Nothing is but that was made by Him. Everything, therefore, has its origin with God.

But consider the consequences if this verse is not true, if God did not bring into being all things by His creative power. If Genesis 1:1 does not state the truth concerning origin, then:

- Life has no source. It originated accidentally, with no outside force.
- The Scriptures are unreliable – they tell us God created when He did not create.
- Sin is a delusion. Sin is a violation of the creative design – a violation of law issued by a higher being than man himself.
- Christ died in vain. Christ died to save man from his sin – from the penalty of sin. But if sin is a delusion, the death of Christ is pointless and unnecessary. It pays no penalty.
- Salvation is a farce. If one is not lost then he cannot be saved. There is no salvation because there is no condemnation.
- Christian hope is vanity. This life is all there is. Every grave is sealed for all eternity.
- Death is doom. Man is not an eternal being – his spirit does not return to God for there is no God and no spirit.
- Hell is a relic, dreamed up by vengeful men to torture the dying and to scar the living ignorant into submission.
- Heaven is a dream, a fool's paradise with no higher purpose than to help weary ones bear the heavy burdens of life.

But we must not end here: if Genesis 1:1 does state the truth about creation, then:

- Life does have a source – God.
- The Scriptures are reliable – we can trust them in every matter upon which they speak.
- Sin is a reality – its penalty is death and destruction.
- Christ's death was a necessity – He died in our stead.
- Salvation is a fact – we can rejoice in deliverence.

- Christian hope is a certainty – as surely as Christ arose we shall rise (1 Cor. 15:12-10).
- Death is not the end – it is only a step in God's plan.
- Hell is the ultimate end of sin and disobedience.
- Heaven is a divine place, peopled with all the redeemed of the earth.

It can thus be seen that the hope of man here and his salvation in the world to come depends upon the truthfulness of Genesis 1:1. If God created the heaven and the earth, as the Bible says He did, then all is His and we will all be called to account for the way we have praised or rejected Him; if it is not true, if we are not here by His creative act, then nothing matters. All is lost. There is nothing to hope for but annihilation in death.

We believe Genesis 1:1 is true. Do you?

BOOKS WE LOVE (2)

One of the most treasured sets of books in our library (it now comes in a single volume) is **The People's New Testament With Notes** by B. W. Johnson. Although we rarely refer to it now, we love it because of what it meant to us in the early days of our Christian life. To show why this is so, we lift the following from the preface of our latest book. **Commentary on Romans:**

"I was reared under the influence of denominationalism in the poverty striken mountains of East Tennessee. But worse than the poverty was the isolation. Until a few weeks before I obeyed the gospel I had never heard of the churches of Christ as I now know them. But I loved the Lord, believed the Bible to be the inspired word of God, the only source of religious truth, and I desired with my whole heart to do that which was right in the sight of God. As I studied the Bible (the only religious book I possessed) I preached and put into practice everything I learned from it. This created some problems in the church for which I preached, problems which eventually led to division. About the time the division took place my oldest brother heard some preachers on the radio in a distant city. He identified them with our needs and desires – the desire to go back to the Bible and follow it in every act of faith and practice. He contacted them and asked them to come and help us.

"In a few weeks one of the radio preachers, Oswald D. Wilson, who had a short time previous to this renounced the digression of the 'Christian Church,' came to our community and scheduled a five night's meeting with the small rural church for which I was preaching. On the second night of the meeting, every member of the church who was present, except one (my mother, and she maintained until the day of her death that she had been Scripturally baptized in her youth), including me, went forward to make the good confession and to be baptized (the following day) for the remission of our sins, as Peter had instructed penitent believers to do on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36-38). When we assembled the next day (there was no prepared place to baptize that night) to obey our Lord, seven more members, not present the night before, came to make the confession and thus the whole congregation was baptized together.

"After the meeting was over, and because of our remote location, we were largely isolated from other members of the church, except for an occasional visit by someone or an annual event when some distant preacher came for a week's meeting. It was a considerable time before I had the benefit of a single paper or book published by our brethren. I had no helps in my study, teaching, and preaching, and no one to guide me in the study of the divine word. How my heart longed for some help in studying the Scriptures, in teaching classes, and in preparing sermons can never be told. Then one day, in the providence of God, a preacher who had come for a Saturday night's preach-

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ing engagement told me about a set of books that I ought to have. He said that he had a dealership with some book stores and that he would get them for me at his exact cost. I ordered them.

"The next time he came he reached to me one of the most precious pressessions of a lifetime, **The People's New Testament With Notes,** by B. W. Johnson. When I got home and began to explore it a whole new world suddenly opened to me. Here was a storehouse of Bible knowledge, such as I had never dreamed existed, condensed and ready for my use. I learned therefore that I could drink freely from the labors of another's study. There was help available! And I could learn from books. What a giant step that was for an illiterate mountain preacher. (Incidentally, as I write this I am in my library, surrounded by hundreds of books, reaching from floor to ceiling, all of them dearly loved - each has a marvelous story all its own as to how it entered my affections, but no human book has ever opened up so many fresh new insights, or approaches, or instilled in me so many new ambitions, hopes, and dreams as did my first examination of Johnson's Notes. I still treasure that set as a part of my permanent library, and thank God for the man who introduced me to them and indirectly to the world of Biblical literature)."

This should reveal to you why Johnson's Notes stand next to the Bible in books we love. If it could in any way be the help to others that it has been to us, we would like to see churches giving this book to every new convert.

WHO HAS FAILED?

Paul said, "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." (Eph. 4:1.) The vocation here is the Christian life - following Christ in both disposition (Phil. 2:5) and conduct (1 Pet. 2:21). The call is the gospel call - the call to be a child of the Living God, to serve Him who made and rules the whole universe. To fail to walk worthy of this high calling is to violate a trust (to live for other than our creative purpose), to de-throne God (to try to become the ruler of our own lives), to despise Biblical ethics, and to pollute the holy. It is therefore no small matter for a Christian to sin, and more especially to make sin a way of life.

From the day we became a Christian we have believed and taught that Christianity offered the best way of life - that it made men honest, compassionate, concerned, truthful, peaceful, happy, and hopeful, that to become a Christian meant to turn one's back upon the world, its ruler (Satan), and all the ways of wickedness. We have often said (and we believe it now more than ever) that Christianity makes better fathers, better mothers, better children, better husbands, better wives, better neighbors, better business men, better doctors, better lawyers, better policemen, better judges, better politicans, better employers, better employees, or in short, better people. This we have believed; this we now believe; and this we shall continue to believe as long as there is reason in our heart and life in our body. This conclusion is based upon the thousands of Christians we have known who are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. They represent the heights to which man can reach when he is in Christ Jesus.

But unfortunately there are a large number of professed Christians who are as low, as mean, as dishonest, as cruel, as selfish as the devil wants them to be. While their number is small in comparison to the whole, there is still enough for their stench to permeate the whole. As sad as it is, there are "Christians" who stand below the average person in the world in honesty, sincerity, fairness, and a decent disposition. The average person in the world pays his debts better, expresses his anger less frequent, threatens less often, is more open and less likely to withdraw and pout, not as apt to try to justify his dishonesty by finding fault with the people to whom he is indebted. From the prospective of a business person, it is a mad house out there and many "Christians" are contributing more than their share to the madness. What a reproach this brings upon the very thing God designed to save the world.

The problem, however, is not Christianity. It will do more for man than we can ask, think, see, or anticipate. The problem is that some who profess to be Christians are still children in the devil (or at least they are so in their actions). It would appear that they have not entered the church by the new birth but by infiltration and they are destroying its holy character from within. It is a failure to follow Paul's instructions, "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye have been called." And by failing to walk worthy of our vocation, we reduce Christianity to a laughingstock to the world it is supposed to save. If the gospel cannot save us from dishonesty and immoral conduct, why should the world take its divine message seriously? As Christians, we are God's samples of what the gospel is designed to do in the lives of sinful men.

But thanks be to God, the picture is not all dark: Christianity has not failed (it can still do all it has promised to do, as is evidenced by the changed lives of millions throughout the world); we fail Christianity (when we fail to live to its high standard and do and be all it instructs us to do and be). We have a worthy vocation. And everyone who confesses the name of Christ should walk worthy of it. Those who do not must pay the price of eternal shame and regret.

What Do You Do With The Erring?

Barry Fike, Hickory, NC

What should be done with the erring members of the congregation? By erring I mean those that either do not attend services at all and still are considered as members of the Lord's body, or those who attend every once in a while when it is convenient for them to do so.

Should we simply mark them off the role and consider that the Lord has done the same? Should we call them up and mark them as dividers or troublemakers? What should we do with the erring?

The writer of Hebrews tells us in 12:14 to "Strive . . . for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." (RSV.) Surely there is none in the church today that would consider such an erring member as one in which the world could see the holiness of our Lord and Christ. What then should we do with the erring according to the Bible?

When we were faced with this problem last year, and again this year, we devised upon a plan that was so successful we were able to draw a chart to illustrate it. Upon implementation of this plan we restored all but one. The plan is found in God's word.

Paul told the Galatians, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:1-2.) If a member is not faithful in his attendance what is the congregation's **duty** to that member? " . . . you who are spiritual should restore him." But exactly how is that done? Christ told us in Matthew 18:15 that one person should go to him. Instead of a crowd of people going to pressure him we have found the wisdom in one close friend sitting down with this person to find out what the problem is that hinders him from coming to services. Usually this is all it takes to the person who has an open heart and mind to the message of Christ and the love of his brethren. If this works and interest is shown then this friend continues to work and visit with this member until he is restored and working hard in the Lord's service.

However, this did not work every time. Satan would harden their heart as he did Pharoah's and more drastic action was needed to save their souls. Christ states that the second step would be to take two or three more. Since the problem was either ignored or not dealt with properly, we would send two more people with this person who first visited with them. They would go with some charts written by Willie Gato and published by Christian Lighthouse, Inc. These charts show in a simple, honest, and loving way how far they are from Christ and what the action of the church, including withdrawal of fellowship, will be should they continue in their rebellious attitude toward God. In nine out of 10 cases this approach worked so well that when we asked the person to pray with us for his restoration, after the charts were finished, they would be weeping and gladly pray with us. With these, one of the three would continue to visit them weekly until they were working hard.

Unfortunately this did not work 100 per cent of the time either. We next had to tell the church, according to Christ's third step. How long do you give the church to contact this individual and plead for his return? If it is an indefinite period of time you lose sight of the reason for such action. If too short a period of time, then the effectiveness of this third step is lost. Therefore, we decided upon a period of 2 months. If after this period of time, then withdrawal of fellowship would take place.

Are you doing what Christ would do with the erring?

Moments On The Mountain

T. Douglas Couch, Asheboro, NC

Matthew 17:1-5.

As the disciples slept, their master prayed (Luke 9:28-32). Awakened by the voices and by intense light, they were startled to see their King totally divested of His earthly humility and clothed in His Kingly array. His face was as bright as the sun and His clothes were whiter than what any professional laundryman's bleach could do (Matt. 17:22; Mark 9:3). Such an impression was made upon the mind of Peter that thirty years later he would write: " . . . but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (2 Pet. 1:16-17.) This heavenly voice was a response to a hasty proposal that Peter made to Jesus. If Jesus consented, Peter, James and John would build three places of worship: one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

Peter's proposition was the result of erroneous thinking. First, Peter's statement betrayed an underestimation of Jesus. Jesus was greater than Moses and Elijah but if Peter had had his way, he would have reduced Jesus to a mere human being, on a level of equality with Moses and Elijah. Many today underestimate the power of His love and sacrifice. "Jesus will be my Savior when I get my life straightened out" is the motto of many. However if I can live the right life without His power, then I do not need Him.

Secondly, Peter forgot that there are limits in our respect and loyalty for human beings. God in no way intended to dishonor Moses and Elijah. Great as they were they were still at best mere human beings. God was impressing upon Peter that He must be first in our lives before anyone. Today our loyalty to God is challenged by family, friends, and employers. They demand time that we promised to God long ago. Preachers sometimes violate this principle by demanding the reverence from fellow Christians which should be reserved for God alone.

Thirdly, Peter allowed emotional ecstasy to take the place of reality. The mountain scene was majestic, dazzling, glorious, emotional, and ecstatic. "It is good for us to be **here**," said Peter. Peter would have neglected the duties of the valley below to continue the glories of the mountain top. But discipleship does not give us the luxury of daydreaming with our "heads in the clouds." God has called us to Christian service in performing "the daily grind" of things in God's way. See Titus 2:1-7. Christian living is joyful, but not deluded. We are contented, but not out of touch with reality.

"Hear ye him" is the divine command. We can grow as Peter did in hearing Him in all things (2 Pet. 1:3).

Reverence In Worship

Dave Ferneyhough, Georgetown, SC

More and more I am seeing parents and teachers alike bringing toys and gadgets for children to play with during Bible School and worship. If we teach them to play during worship when they are five, six, and seven, we shouldn't get upset when they play during worship when they are 15, 16, and 17. They are only acting the way they were taught.

We teach our children not to play at the dinner table because that is a time to eat. We teach them not to play in class at school because that is a time to learn. But when it comes time for public worship, we teach them it is okay to play. Where is our consistency?

I know the objections that are often given. We are told that they cannot sit still for a whole hour, yet, they sit still before the TV for many hours. We are told that they are too young to know what is going on. That may be true of pre-schoolers, but even they can learn the importance of being quiet while worship is in progress. Those in grade school and up are old enough to begin learning what worship to God is. Too often we understimate what our children are capable of learning. A two-year old will quickly learn that by making a disturbance in the assembly he can go out to the nursery and play. So he makes a disturbance every Sunday. If he is taken out and spanked, he learns that making a disturbance is the wrong behavior in the assembly.

Parents and teachers who allow their children to wiggle, talk, play, roll around on pews, write notes, etc. in the assembly cannot concentrate on the worship of God. Such a situation makes it impossible for others to concentrate. I wonder what kind of impression we make on our visitors. When we assemble to worship our God and children play while parents sleep, He is surely displeased. Do we assemble to pour out our hearts in **Prayer, Songs, Study, Lord's Supper,** and **Giving,** or do we come because of duty and habit? Have we forgotten the teaching, " . . . worship him in **spirit** and in **truth.**" (John 4:24.)

Someone has well said:

Why Do You Go?

Some go to church to take a walk;
Some go to church to laugh and talk;
Some go to church to meet a friend;
Some go there their time to spend.
Some go there to meet a lover,
Some go there a fault to cover.
Some go there for speculation;
Some go there for observation;
Some go there to doze and nod;
The wise go there to worship God.

Let us be assured that God loves all mankind, but He expects us to come before Him in reverence. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." (Psalm 29:2.)

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Preacher Be Faithful!

K. Wayne Walton, Lancaster, SC

The writer of a newspaper column expounded upon the theme that deciding what is good and what is evil causes considerable problems for modern-day preachers as they prepare their sermons. He noted that times have changed since the days when whole families turned out with hundreds of others for camp meetings. Along with the changing times, church-goers have changed also. Preachers are finding the rapid changes that are abounding our modern society to be confusing. Society's concept of sin makes it difficult to define a sin to be against; therefore the preachers have serious problems with knowing what and how to preach. The writer goes on to explain that, while some think preaching suffers because modern-day preachers lack courage, the real trouble may be that the modern-day church just cannot see things in easy terms of good and evil, black and white, right and wrong.

Of course, the writer's observations do not serve as any new revelation or herald a new phenomenon. Human society has always been in a continual state of change. However, the effect such change has on preachers and preaching is unsettling only when preachers imagine that God's revelation to men must be adjusted to satisfy the tastes and meet the approval of each new society. God's purpose and plan for man is clearly set forth in the Scriptures and has always been the same. Even in the Bible we can read of vain attempts on the part of various societies to force God to adjust Himself and His purpose and plan to accomodate whatever direction the given society had chosen to take. But such pompous human schemes have never been successful, and they will not work now. Men, especially preachers, must recognize and acknowledge that "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my [God's] words shall not pass away." (Luke 21:33.) A preacher must never yield to the idea that, if a practice becomes socially acceptable and respectable, his preaching must be adjusted to allow for that acceptance. Authority to define sin was never delegated to preachers; that is God's right. It is vain and foolish for men to attempt to redefine sin every time society changes.

Religious folk sometimes pressure the preachers to play the part of technical expert on sin; and they demand that he be able to catalog and define each sin precisely and in minute detail or else admit that he is not qualified to speak on the subject, leaving them free to do anything that is not specifically and explicitly condemned in the Scriptures. Preachers must not allow themselves to fall into this trap. Men are inventors of evil things (Eccl. 7:29; Rom. 1:30), and if God had chosen to speak concerning every conceivable sin, all the libraries in the world would not be able to shelve His revelation. In listing sinful works at Galatians 5:19-21, Paul listed seventeen and then seems to have realized the futility of trying to enumerate all the sins man might imagine; so he simply added, "and such like."

Jesus once told an audience of skeptical rebels, "If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:17.) While these words were spoken in the context of determining whether the teachings of Jesus were of divine or human origin, there is a principle suggested in the Lord's statement that is useful in unfolding the secret of discerning whether a contemplated deed is right or wrong when it is not addressed specifically in the Scriptures: A steadfast mind to do God's will is essential. If one's will is first and foremost to do God's will and to please Him, he will not have any great difficulty in determining whether an act fits with the kinds of deeds that are right or the kinds of deeds that are wrong. But as long as a person is bent on doing his own will, he will abide in a state of indecision while he searches for some technicality or

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loophole whereby he might get around the force and intent of God's revelation.

The problem is not that God has given us insufficient light to enable us to recognize sin. The problem is that many have turned their backs on the source of light, that they might walk in the outer fringes of light toward the darkness. And they call for someone (the preacher) to define precisely and technically where the light ends and darkness begins so that they may walk as closely to darkness as possible and still feel safe. When people sincerely desire to do God's will, and will turn their faces fully to the light of God's word, they will not have such a bewildering problem in discerning right and wrong. In the meantime, preachers must ponder God's instruction to the prophet Ezekiel (Ez. 3:17-21). You can look it up.

Deadly Willful Ignorance

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

"He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. 29:1.)

Here is a person who refuses to be taught, to hear the truth, to listen when it is heard. This is one who is set in his own ways and simply cannot be taught. If we persistently refuse to hear God's voice no matter how many times He speaks (through His written word), we are headed for a destruction in life and the destruction of life. Ignorance of God's word leaves a void in our lives that is soon filled by the troubles of sin. We must allow God's word to remold, reform, and correct our thinking. If not, there will be no help and no escape, with no way to avoid it.

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Here's The Answer

To Questions You've Asked

Howard Winters

"Suppose one should attend services where instrumental music is used in worship, would it be wrong and unscriptural to sing along with them, the singing being accompanied by an instrument, when one is in no way responsible for playing the instrument or for its introduction into the worship?" This is a composite of several questions that have been raised recently on the music question, stimulated, we suppose, by the meeting of 100 brethren of both persuasions in Joplin, Missouri last year. With the issue forcefully before us, probably as a result of the Joplin unity meeting, we believe the times now demand some serious study of the issue - that our question demands more from us than a simple yes or no answer. We must go to the Scriptures, the divine standard for all faith and practice, and give a reason for the answer we give (1 Pet. 3:15).

If the use of instrumental music is wrong in Christian worship, it is wrong everywhere it is used in worship, if it is right to sing with "them" when they use the instrument, then the act itself is not wrong and we are wrong in opposing its use among ourselves. The question is not, "When and where is it right to sing along with an instrument in worship," but "Is it right or Scriptural to do so at any time or any place under any circumstances?" If it is right among "them" then it would be right among "us." If it is wrong among "us" then it is wrong among "them." A thing is not wrong for "us" and right for "them." Neither is it wrong to sing with an instrument when it is used by "us" and right when it is used by "them." It is either right or wrong. Thus we long ago concluded that it would be just as wrong and unscriptural to sing along with an instrument (as an act of or in the context of worship) among "them" (meaning the "Christian Church" or any denominational church that uses the instrument) as it would be to sing with it in our own worship. What would be the difference?

But in responding to this question we are not now taking the time to prove from the Scriptures that the use of instrumental music in Christian worship is wrong (that we will gladly do if called upon). We have already proven this time and again in debates (both public and written), in sermons, and in many published articles. And besides that, most of our readers already agree (including all those who have raised the current questions) that its use is a violation of Scriptural principles and is therefore sinful. What we do propose to do here is to present a Scriptural principle which will prove beyond any doubt, to those who love and believe the truth revealed to us in the New Testament, that it is just as sinful to sing with an instrument when we are worshiping with "them" as it is when we worship with "us."

Paul, in prohibiting the Corinthians from eating meats sacrificed to idols, gave as his primary reason the fact that a worshiper becomes one with those with whom he worships as well as one with the object of his worship. In other words, to eat meat in sacrifice to idols meant that the Christian was breaking his union with Christ and uniting himself with both the idol and the idolaters - that is, becoming one body with them. To see the force of this, we need to get before us Paul's complete argument:

"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the com-

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munion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (1 Cor. 10:14-22.)

In verses 14 and 15 Paul appeals to them as intellegent men to keep on running from (or shunning) all idolatry, specifically in this context, the eating of meats in sacrifice to idols. The Corinthians were probably reasoning that they knew that an idol was nothing (1 Cor. 8:4) and Paul himself had conceded that the meat **per se** was not polluted simply because it was offered as a sacrifice to a false deity (1 Cor. 8). Thus what would be wrong with them eating the meat at a festival (when they knew that an idol was nothing and their intentions was to partake of it as food, with no though of worship involved) along with those who were eating it as an act of worship? Paul's answer is imbedded in two illustrations given in verses 16-18.

First, in verses 16-17, he uses as an illustration the Lord's Supper. This memorial, he says, is a communion of the blood and body of the Lord. It is a participation (a sharing, a partnership, a fellowship) in the sacrificial death of Christ. That is, it connects one with Christ (Him as the giver and the partaker as the receiver of the benefits) in His suffering and death. How could we thus participate in the body and blood of Christ without being one with Him – without being joined to Him and all others who partake in aim and purpose (joined to Him in fellowship)? We cannot.

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Clayton Pepper, Editor

There are some translation difficulties in verse 17, as can be verified by comparing the KJV and ASV with other translations, but the point remains unchanged regardless of how it is translated. The KJV (and the ASV is virtually the same) says, "For we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." This makes us partakers of ourselves because we are the one bread of which we partake. This hardly seems reasonable. We think the New American Standard Bible translates Paul's point more accurately by rendering it, "Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread." Did Paul say that we are one bread, one body, or did he say that because we partake of the one bread we are therefore one body? It seems certain to us, from the whole context, that his aim is to demonstrate the unity of the body by the fact that all partake of one bread (in worship) – that is, all are one body because they all partake of one bread. His argument is that if we are one because we eat the same (one) loaf, then it follows with all the force reason can have that they would be one with idols and idolaters if they ate with them (in their worship) at the devil's table. That is, if sharing together at the Lord's table made them one body (a thing which the Corinthians would obviously admit), it would logically follow that sharing in the worship of idols (even though it was not their intention to worship or in any way to recognize the idols as gods) would make them one both with the idol and the idolaters.

Second, the same principle is illustrated in verse 18 by the priests of Israel who became one with the altar by eating the sacrifice of the altar. Just so, when one eats the sacrifical offerings in worship to idols (even when there is no intention to worship) he becomes one with them.

With the principle now established, he moves on to show, in verses 19-22, that all idol worship is ultimately devil worship. This is true because there are only two spiritual realms, that pertaining to God (Col. 1:13) and that over which Satan reigns (Eph. 6:12). To worship anything other than God, or to worship in any way unacceptable to God, is to remove worship from its true realm and object and render it in the realm of evil. We believe the principle here can be applied to all false worship because in the final analysis idol worship is simply a form of false worship. This in effect means that anyone who worships with those engaged in false worship becomes one (a sharer) with them. And Paul says, " . . . I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." (1Cor. 10:20.) Or to apply the principle to our situation, he would not that we have fellowship with vain worship - he would not that we become one with those who worship falsely.

All this is to say that when we participate in false worship we become one with those who worship falsely. And it is always contrary to the will of God for His people to be in union (fellowship or partnership) with that which pertains to the devil (and keep in mind that if it does not pertain to God then it must pertain to the devil). Eating the sacrifice with idolaters (in the contex of worship or service) would make the Corinthians one with both the idol and the idolaters in both principle and practice (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16-18), even though the Christian's intention was only to eat the meat as food, not to worship or serve the idol. This postively shows that, while one's intentions must be right for his worship to be right, it is not necessary for one's intentions to be wrong for his worship to be wrong. True worship must have the right object, the right spirit or motive, and the right acts - acts directed by truth (John 4:23-24). Wrong motives plus the right acts or the right motives plus the wrong acts equal vain worship (cf. Matt. 15:9). True worship consist of the right motives and the right acts directed toward the right object. The Corinthians were prohibited from joining those whose acts were directed toward the wrong object; our problem is, in worshiping with those who use the instrument, the wrong acts directed toward the right object. We believe the same principle prohibits the participation in both.

While it is true that Paul addressed the problem of eating meats offered in sacrifice to idols in worship (not just the eating of meats which had been offered as sacrifice when the eating was removed from the context of worship), we believe the principle would apply to all false worship. If so, then when one sings with those who are using the instrument in worship, he becomes one with them in their practice - that is, he is a sharer with them in the act. This being the case, there can be no question but that it is wrong for "us" to sing when we are visiting with those who use the instrument in their worship. If the principle set forth by Paul is here correctly applied (namely, that one is a sharer with those with whom he unites in worship, even when he does not intend his action to be worship), there is no escape from this conclusion.

Don't Muzzle The Preacher

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

Read Acts 20.

Controversial Subjects

Many of our preachers are told what to preach. They may be instructed by the leaders of the congregation not to preach on anything that may cause a controversy. Or they may be told not to preach on a subject that may possible offend someone. When elders or other leaders in a congregation dictate to the preacher what to preach for fear that it may cause controversy or offend someone, this is muzzling the preacher. What they probably don't realize is that any sermon on the Bible could well create a controversy. One of the definitions for the word controversy is "disagreement or altercation." A person not well versed in the Scriptures can very well disagree when their opinion is not in harmony with the sermon even though the Bible is fact. And so, when a person disagrees with something which is taught, that is controversy. If a person does not agree with the preacher or if such a person believes that the speaker is teaching something erroneous he has the responsibility to go to the preacher promptly and discuss the erroneous teaching. This is not controversy.

The person should be able to substantiate his belief of the erroneous teaching by using the Scriptures. Every member has the privilege and responsibility to correct erroneous teaching. It may well be true that the teaching was contrary to the Bible and the speaker should be glad that his error was brought to his attention.

The Purpose of Preaching

Preaching is not something that we may have just to suit us. Preaching was ordained by God and commanded by Jesus and His apostles. Gospel preaching proceeds from the basic conviction that life, if acceptable to God, must be lived on His terms. Every person has what is known as a "frame of reference" to which he refers his questions as to what or what not to do, or what or what not to believe. The purpose of preaching is to call attention to what God would have us believe or do. Sermons which are in harmony with the Bible are not soft, easy, or to be presented to "itching ears." They are "hard" lessons. Jesus did not preach to please His hearers, but He taught what God wanted taught. Jesus had courage. He even collared the scribes and Pharisees and called them hypocrites, serpents, vipers, fools, and blind guides (see Matt. 23). Any time a preacher is required to preach (or does so of his own choosing) to always please the hearers, he is not following the teaching of Jesus. How can a preacher present a sermon on the responsibilities of giving, or attendance at all services, or doing evangelistic work, or the necessity of spending more time with God's word (just to mention a few subjects) and not have some of the hearers take issue with him? These are "hard" lessons and must be heeded by all of us. They are surely not for the "itching ear" crowd.

Gospel preaching has been a custom since the beginning of Christ's kingdom. Preaching was responsible, perhaps more than any work, for the rapid growth and development of the early church. Yet, every faithful preacher knows that his ministry cannot be effective, and fulfill its mission effectively unless the people understand something of the way in which he is able to serve them. Everyone who is loyal to Christ knows that all preaching which meets Divine approval must be in harmony with the principles of the New Testament. But it must be remembered that the preacher is not the only one who has responsibility in the matter of preaching.

Let The Preacher Preach

Someone will say, why make such a request as that? No one is going to hinder him from preaching. All of that may be true but there is something that is not so well understood. That is, every member has a responsibility in this preaching besides monetary contribution to pay the preacher. This responsibility requires two things on the part of each individual: (1) Be present, and (2) Be in the proper frame of mind to receive instruction. Under no condition should it be dictated to the preacher what he must preach or what he must not preach, as long as he is a sound gospel preacher and in love with the Bible and its teaching. And if he doesn't meet those qualifications he shouldn't be preaching in the first place. He must never be told that he must preach sermons that always please everyone present and never say anything that might offend someone. I like the statement attributed to Abraham Lincoln: "You may please some of the people all the time, and you may please all the people some of the time, but it is impossible to please all the people all the time." And so I say, "Let the preacher preach!"

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BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Ethiopian Giving

Oklahoma City. As of January 7, more than $5.7 million has been given by churches of Christ throughout the United States and around the world toward the relief of hungry Christians in Ethiopia. The final total will likely surpass $6 million.

Carl Allison of the White's Ferry Road church, one of the churches involved in the fund-raising project, said that White's Ferry Road alone had received contributions from 3,080 congregations and 3,059 individuals. White's Ferry Road is collecting funds to be administered by the Central church of Christ in Stockton, California.

John Ed Clark, coordinator of the Central church of Christ relief project, reported that training of food relief workers in Ethiopia began January 2. Distribution of food was to begin in the northern rural section of Ethiopia by January 11.

Wilmeth Anniversary

Carrolton, Texas. P. D. Wilmeth, noted preacher and author, began his 60th year of preaching in December. Wilmeth began preaching when he was 18 and is presently preaching for the Hebron Parkway church of Christ in Carrolton. He has been there since January, 1981.

V. E. Howard Honored

Ft. Worth, Texas. On December 7, V. E. Howard was honored at the 18th Annual Gospel Sing-Song for 50 years of radio preaching. Howard is the speaker for the International Gospel Hour, which is aired on more than 140 stations across the United States. The sing-song was conducted in the auditorium of the South MacArthur church of Christ in Irving, Texas and attracted approximately 2,800 people. Howard was honored at the mid-way point in the program for his radio preaching.

Schools Accredited

Three Christian colleges have recently been accredited. Alabama Christian College was fully accredited as a senior college by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools on December 11, 1984. ACC has gone from a junior college to a fully accredited senior college in only four years, two years less than the national average.

The SACS also granted full accreditation to Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas on the same date. The accreditation was granted to the baccalaureate-level program of the school and means that the college now enjoys senior college status.

International Bible College had recently applied for canditate status accreditation and it was granted by the American Association of Bible Colleges. Canditate status gives IBC all the benefits and privileges of full accreditation and means that credits from the collete would more easily transfer to other colleges. IBC was one of the two colleges that received accreditation out of 15 that applied.

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Carolina Church News

NEWS BRIEF

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

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NORTH CAROLINA.

Charlotte. The Archdale church is assisting in the financial support of Roy Deaver to enable him to have more time to write. More than $1,700 was recently collected for this purpose.

N.C. Baptisms

Helen St., Fayetteville, 1; Brooks Avenue, Raleigh, 12; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 5; Highland Acres, Statesville, 2; Gastonia 1; Roosevelt Dr., Jacksonville, 1. Total: 22.

Linville Forest, Kernesville

MICHAEL STONE, Reporting: The Linville Forest congregation ended 1984 with a total of 102 responses. So far, 1985 has seen 12 responses. Attendance and giving are at an all time high. Glann M. Lee will preach in a meeting, April 21-25.

SOUTH CAROLINA.

Greenville. Edgewood congregation has appointed three additional deacons.

Spartanburg. Central has selected Albert Gardner to serve as pulpit minister. Brother Gardner has previously worked in seven different states and two foreign countries.

West Columbia. Dennis Johnson, former minister at West Columbia, is now working in India. In his first two weeks there he reports six conversions and more opportunities for teaching than time allows.

Greenville. A new attendance record was set in February with 333 at the morning service.

Lexington. The church has begun supporting a native preacher in India. Bob Rigdon will preach in a gospel meeting May 3-5.

St. George. Rick Parks is scheduled for a gospel meeting April 14-19.

Columbia. A report from St. Andrews Road indicates a total of $48,193.25 was contributed for assistance to 1984 tornado victims. This included a gift of $15,000 from one Texas congregation. Distribution of the funds was made through churches of Christ in Laurens, Newberry, and Fairfield counties.

S. C. Baptisms

Lexington 1; Myrtle Beach 2; St. Andrews, Columbia, 1; Bennettsville 1; Duncan 1; Northeast, Taylors, 3; Winnsboro 1; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill, 2. Total: 11.

Ethiopia

Last month we reported on contributions from Carolina churches toward relief work in Ethiopia. A total of $58,789.83 was listed for the two states. Here are additional contributions which were not reported last month.

In North Carolina: Burlington - $1,448; Lenoir - $250; Boone - $440.35; Hickory - $367.25; and Mooresville - $305; for a total of $2,810.60.

In South Carolina: Greenwood - $555; Duncan - $1,000; Windsor Lake, Columbia - $500; (plus $50 per month); St. George - $888; and Orangeburg - $300; for a total of $3,243.

A report from Whites Ferry Road church in West Monroe, Louisiana which has been handling funds for Ethiopia, indicates the following totals. In North Carolina 58 congregations have sent $64,768. In South Carolina 33 congregations have sent $42,385. It is clear, therefore, that much more was given than we were able to list in our report.

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Editorial Book Reviews

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

I Never Thought It Would Be This Way, James A. Jones; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 174 pages, paper, $5.50.

The author has written out of his own experience and study, and all that he has learned from his clients as their counselor. It is a refreshing approach to an old subject, the subject of marriage. The effort of this work is to be realistic, to be about reality. It deals with marriages as they really are and offers guidelines to overcome the struggles. This book deals with the emotions of the marriage relationship and how to deal with them so that they will bless the marriage and not destroy it. It deals with such things as respect, knowledge of yourself and spouse, being a fit helper, the hard work of the marriage, feeling and sensitivity. It also deals with values and how feelings and values effect the relationship. It encourages the need to make changes to develop the marriage. You will find the chapter dealing with the woman's place in the home to be honest, open, and challenging to both old and new ideas. This book will be a valuable contribution to any Christian's library of material dealing with the subject. It is written from a Christian perspective on reality.

From Pentecost to the Present, James North; College Press Publishing Company, Box 1132, Joplin, MO 64801; 520 pages, hardcover, $18.95.

This book is short history of Christianity. It is not a theology book, but a history book. It is designed to be a textbook or companion to another in a course studying this subject. It helps us to understand the growth of the Lord's church, its apostacy and the various "Christian" religions that have formulated from that. It also helps to understand how the events of human history effect the growth of the Lord's church and the development of these various religions in Europe and America. It is very informative and easy to read. An enjoyable book for those interested in this subject.

Lord, Help Me When I'm Hurting, Harold Hazelip; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506; 117 pages, paper, $3.95.

In this book, the author faces head-on the emotional pains that hit us. It deals with such hurts as failure, poor self-image, stress, unhappiness, depression, guilt, and unanswered prayer. In each of these you will find a sound Christian perspective of life. Each chapter offers solid help for dealing with these struggles. In each chapter, the problem is analyzed, an example is seen from Christ's life as He confronted these struggles, and guidelines are developed to help us overcome these problems. It is sensitive to the human heart and the heart of God. It is written out of the human experience and the Christian experience guided by the living truth for life of God's powerful word. You will find that the chapter on loneliness is warm and loving. It is permeated with the need of man and the powerful love of God to supply the need for life. It is practical, personal, and full of hope. It is excellent material for private or group study.

The Mythology of Modern Geology, Wayne Jackson; Apologetics Press, 3906 East Main St., Stockton, CA 95205; 45 pages, paper, $2.00.

The subtitle of this book is "A Refutation of Evolution's Most Influential Argument." The Author has given much research and study to the theory of evolution and its falacies. We hear much about its scientific errors, but this book also challenges its historical falacies. The evolution theory rests entirely in a geological timetable. The author not only notes Scripture, but documents **geological** proof that defeats the geological timetable of the evolutionist. It declares the arbitrary rationale of the timetable and therefore does not rest on solid fact. The book is concise, clear, informative to anyone who reads it. It shows that the "evidence" they offer is manipulated and twisted with assumptions. It also offers proof of modern living plants and animals that crumbles this argument. This book will help anyone to defeat the argument of evolutionist on his own ground.

Decisions-Volume I, Sherlie Rowe; Quality Publications, P. O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 91 pages, paper, $3.95.

In this book the author has taken the

sacred histories of Dinah and Hagar and written a good study book for a young women's class. The book explores the lives of these two young womem and reveals the morals to be learned by the decisions these two made. The study is built on the principle that our lives are made from our choices and this book approaches those faced by young women today. Dinah is a study in the daughter who is tired of her parents training and the tragedy it created for her. Hagar demonstrates that God is a real hero for the teenaged girl. It is informative and instructive. It is highly recommended for private and group study.

Decisions-Volume II, Sherlie Rowe; Quality Publications, P. O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 75 pages, paper, $3.95.

A companion to **Decisions-Volume I.** Together, they make eight lessons of valuable study for the young Christian woman. In this volume, the author uses the illustrious life of Abigail to teach that we can have wisdom and security for decision making, even in the midst of unhappiness. It shows both the trouble of bad decisions and the blessing of good decisions. Most teenaged girls, and boys, tend to think that things are not going right until they "try their own wings" to make it right. Though that is not a proper attitude, these two books help teens to learn right principles to make those decisions they are faced with. The author is experienced in dealing with teens and young ladies on a practical level. She writes these books from years of study, teaching, and working with young women and their lives. Volume II is also highly recommended for private and group study.

Striving for Holiness, Bobbie Cramer Jobe; Quality Publications, P. O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 66 pages, paper, $2.25.

"Teaching God's Word is one of my greatest joys," the author says, and this book demonstrates that joy. She has taught Bible classes for over 20 years. Her purpose is to help us become holy so that we may someday see the Lord. It is an excellent study for a ladies Bible class containing 13 lessons on this theme of personal holiness. The lessons are packed with Scripture and illustrations. Women of the Bible are studied for examples of the truths she wants to bring out. Holiness is the most positive character and nature that a human being can have and this study makes that application to all aspects of the Christian woman's life. An enjoyable study for all!

Christian Living Is for Real, Tom Walker; 20th Century Christian Foundation, 2809 Granny White Pike, P. O. Box 40526, Nashville, TN 37204; 103 pages, paper, $3.50.

The author began regular preaching work while still in high school and has been working with Christian youth, fulltime, for 20 years. This book is part of his effort to realize the goal for his life. In his own words, He wants to "teach people, both young and old, that the Christian life is the best, most practical life to live." We are told by the publishers that this book was in use by several congregations in large teenage classes one month after its release. This is a study for the teenage class, yet its content is beneficial for all Christians. The lessons are practical for teens, honest, direct, positive, and clearly laid out. Some of the lesson titles are: "The Useless Bible," "The Chrisitan Specialist," "Closing the Generation Gap." This book is refreshing to read. An excellent study for the youth of any congregation.

Meet My Friend David, Jane McWhorter; Quality Publications, P. O. Box 1060, Abilene TX 79604; 97 pages, paper $4.95.

This study book for ladies Bible class is written out of four years of study of David's life and a deep loving appreciation for the man of God. The theme is found in the statement, " . . . the Lord sought him a man after his own heart. . . ." (1 Sam. 13:14.) Verse 14 is a study of how God involved Himself in David's life to develop such a man who pleased Him so. It contains a good outline of the events of David's life as it looks at the high points and the uneventful, unnoticed points. It studies his weaknesses and strengths, his disobedience and obedience. It is a study in this man's character. You will especially enjoy the authors adaptation of the events of David's life to his 23rd Psalm. As she makes application of that to the Christian's relationship with God, you will find it touching, uplifting, and enriching. A man after God's own heart knows God as his shepherd. The author has outdone herself with this work. It is designed for private or group study, but it seems to have a special appeal to the private study.

BACKFIRE

Letters To The Editor

Kind Sir:

Enclosed is $5 for a copy of your commentary on Romans. I am an old lady 93 years old, and love to read religious material. I have read my Bible daily since I obeyed the gospel at the age of 13. I read every issue of **Carolina Christian,** and love it. I live alone and reading is my pleasure. My children take me to worship on Sundays and see after me. I wish you much success with **Carolina Christian** and your commentary. — Mrs. Jessie Anderson, Mocksville, NC

Did you stop to figure out how long this dear sister has been a daily Bible reader? For 80 years. Fantastic! Her letter warmed the depths of our hearts and to our taste was sweeter than honey. Just to satisfy our curiosity, is there an older reader of Carolina Christian?

Dear Mr. Winters:

I am wondering if you might run (a request) in your paper for readers to correspond with me. I must tell you that at the present I am incarcerated in Indiana, but my crime was victimless. I have no family or friends to write and it gets very lonely here. I am a young black male born December 30, 1951. I like sports, music, writing poetry, and meeting people, and I am a bricklayer by trade. I will answer all letters. — Henry Lowry, P. O. Box 41-6642, Michigan City, Ind. 46360.

Here is your chance to reach out and touch a lonely heart with warmth and encouragement. Why not do it today?

Brother Winters:

I enjoy reading your editorials and many of the other articles in **Carolina Christian.** It is always a joy to me to be able to turn to the news section of the paper and see what some of the preachers in the Carolinas are doing whom I know. — D. Gene West, Fairmont, WV

Gene West is editor of *Bible Herald,* an exceptionally fine paper published for the benefit of churches of Christ in the Ohio Valley. We are fortunate to be able to count him among our friends as well as a valued reader.

Brother Winters:

I appreciate so much your work and that of the entire staff of **Carolina Christian.** The articles are truly thought provoking and vital to Christian growth. **Carolina Christian** is the only periodical the Roan Mountain (Tennessee) church provides for every family in the congregation. Although Roan Mountain is in upper East Tennessee, we are the last congregation until one gets to Boone or Marion. While being proud to be a part of the church in East Tennessee we also feel a kinship to the Carolinas. Through **Carolina Christian** we follow closely the course of the church in the Carolinas. — Ed DeVault, Elizabethton, TN

Brother DeVault preaches for the Roan Mountain church and is a friend of long standing. The Roan Mountain church not only has the distinction (and great wisdom) of providing Carolina Christian to every family, it is the only church outside the Carolinas that does so.

Dear Howard:

Thanks for sending me . . . your new book on Romans. I am glad Dennis (Conner — HW) encouraged you to write it. I am also glad that our paths have crossed. Keep up the good work. — Elaine Raper, Fayetteville, NC

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." (Heb. 10:24.)

Dear Howard:

Your book on Romans is super. I have been through it once, and am now reading sections I marked earlier. Let us have more as time goes on. How about one on James, a rich little book we use too little. — Jack Holifield, Elizabethton, TN

If more people feel this way about our notes, then there will be more, the Lord being willing. We are over two thirds through 1 Corinthians, but James is many years down the line. The publication of future books will depend largely on the sale and usefulness of Romans (which at this point is amazing us with sales).

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DUNCAN
CHURCH OF CHRIST

Duncan, S.C. (See Page 6)

editorial

ALL SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED

That the Scriptures are inspired of God we fully believe, believe with every fiber of our being. We simply cannot conceive of the God who is there, who made the world and everything in it, being silent. If He made the world and man (and there is no reasonable alternative to origins), it seems incredible that He would have withdrawn from them without saying anything, especially to the being He made responsible. Nor can we conceive of living in a world with no word from its maker. For man to be the full measure of all things, to have no higher guide than his own intellect, to be left to speculate and conjecture on origin, duty, and values is incredible. When we get to the bottom line, our only hope is that the Bible is from God. If not, we have no compass with which to chart our course — in fact, we would have no course but to be born purposelessly, to live aimlessly, and to die hopelessly.

There are many sound and logical reasons for believing the Bible to be the eternal word of the living God, but we mention only two here:

1. Because of what it teaches — what it teaches about God, the world, man, and eternity. It teaches that God made the world and man. But even more, it teaches that man is a living soul, and eternal being made in the image of his Creator (Gen. 1:26-28), more valuable than the whole material universe (cf. Matt. 16:24-26); so valuable, in fact, is the soul that Jesus died on the cross to save it from sin (Rom. 5:6-9). The Bible further teaches that those who have obeyed the Lord and received the salvation of their souls have a more abundant life here and the hope of eternal life in the world to come. In short, the Bible, because it is the word of God, gives hope in a bleak dreary world. Without it, man would be without knowledge of his origin, nature, duty, or destiny. With it, he is furnished to all that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3,4). To sum up, the Bible is inspired because it teaches the glory of God and the dignity of man.

2. Because of what it does not teach. Unlike other religious books (claiming to be from God) it does not include the foolish and unlearned opinions of men; it does not fall into the trap of teaching an unscientific world view (even though it was written long before the age of science); it does not discriminate against race, sex, or minorities (there is no respect of person with God . . . nor in the Bible); while it was written by about 40 different writers over a period of 1,500 years, it is not tinted in any way with the philosophy of men or the age in which the writers wrote (all the writers claim to speak for God and they deliver a united message); it does not make the mistake of assuming that it contains mistakes (on the contrary, it claims to be perfect in every respect); it does not fall into the hedonistic

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Howard Winters, Editor; David Pharr, Carolina News Editor; Dennis Conner, Brotherhood News Editor, Johnny Melton, Carolina Pulpit Editor.

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error of making pleasure the highest purpose of life; it does not regard the accumulation of wealth as the standard of success and happiness; while utilizing local coloring, it does not limit its message to one locality or to one period of time (it is universal and timeless).

In short, the Bible is credible because it teaches what it ought to teach and it does not teach what it ought not to teach. In every case, the Bible is on the side of truth and right, never on the side of falsehood and wrong. For this reason the Bible is not only credible, it is incredible not to believe it.

WHERE THE SCRIPTURES SPEAK

We have long contended that every person who believes the Bible to be the inspired word of God, heaven's authorative rule of faith and practice, must adopt one of two attitudes toward it (and the attitude adopted will determine its application in our service to God). Either we must say that it permits everything it does not condemn (as did Martin Luther and the vast majority of all protestants who have followed him) or else that it condemns everything (in service to God) that it does not authorize (this is the stance taken by the early leaders in the restoration movement and by nearly all members of churches of Christ throughout the world). Is there a third alternative? If so, we have never seen it clearly stated.

Alexander Campbell (along with many others, but we use Campbell because he is the best known) contended earnestly for a return to a "thus saith the Lord" in all things pertaining to religious faith. This resulted in the slogan, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent." With this concept, thousands were converted to New Testament Christianity. As Christians, and Christians only, they stood united (not on every non-essential matter but on the great fundamental doctrines of Christ). Then something happened. Division invaded the movement. Some men decided that it was too simplistic to follow the Scriptures in all things. They thus began to depart from the pattern of sound words by thinking in terms of a super organization through which the church could work and settle its problems. Thus in 1849 the missionary society was born. This meant that some brethren no longer considered the church in its New Testament organization as an all-sufficient institution — it could not do what God had ordained for it to do in the simple congregational structure the Lord had given it. Later (starting in 1859) instrumental music was added to the worship (to add dignity to the worship and be like the churches around us). This meant that following a thus saith the Lord in worship was no longer sufficient to meet the needs of the modern worshiper. As time went on, other departures were made and changes accepted, all because of an attitude change.

But in order to justify the attitude that the Bible permits all it does not condemn the attitude that it permits only that which it authorizes had to be abandoned. While none verbalized it, this was essentially saying that Luther had been right all along — the Bible is so structured that it does authorize all that it does not condemn. This being the case, Campbell and the restoration leaders were wrong — there should never have been a restoration movement on such simplistic grounds. Grenville T. Walker, a liberal author in the Disciples of Christ (the extreme liberal branch of the restoration movement) concedes to this in his book called **Preaching in the Thoughts of Alexander Campbell** (p. 124). He says:

"But chief of its weaknesses was Campbell's insistence upon honoring the silences of the Bible inflicting a spiritual paralysis upon his fellowship which would have left the church unable to meet the growing exigencies of its development had the principle not been changed. At every point when problems of internal order or external cooperation arose for the solution of which Scriptural precedent could not be found, the movement was deprived of any dynamic and frictionless basis of action. Sheer statesmanship was forthcoming and a needed shift of emphasis resulted."

We cannot help but wonder if it ever occurred to Mr. Walker that the problems which could not be solved by a thus saith the Lord were not a result of the very attitude that said we cannot solve all problems by a thus saith the Lord. The fact is, all problems could be solved, but the ones who adopted the new attitude were not satisfied with (that is, they would not accept) Scriptural solutions. They had abandoned the Bible as their sole guide. It seems obvious to us that if the Bible is not sufficient to instruct us, in all that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3-4), then we have no divine way, no way beyond bare human reason, to settle religious matters. Either we follow the Bible or we must go our own way (see Jer. 10:23). We, along with millions of others, have chosen to follow the Bible, to speak where it speaks and be silent where it is silent. We refuse to offer strange fire, fire which the Lord has not commanded (Lev. 10:1-3), to our God.

THE MESSAGE OF REVELATION

The book of Revelation has proven to be an allusive puzzle to most Christians and theologians alike. It has been a fertile field from which to weave false systems, and those who are so minded can paint such ghastly pictures from it and what they suppose is yet to befall man upon the earth that it strikes uncontrollable fear into the hearts of the unprepared, the unlearned, and the unstable. Unfortunately most of us do not know enough about the book to help us refuse the theories or to refute the false doctrines. It is this that causes a book designed to comfort and encourage to have the exact opposite effect. We draw back from it saying, "We do not know what it teaches." But even with all the dread and fear that has been read into it, we keep reading it, studying it, believing it, and defending it as part of the divine word of God — inspired words that are designed to give us valuable instructions.

We have long believed that the basic message (while clothed in unquestionably difficult symbols) of Revelation is very simple. Its design is to comfort Christians in their distress and to encourage them to be faithful unto death. Those who heed its message are promised victory in the end.

The difficulty lies in the fact that the message is presented symbolically. That simply means that it uses signs and symbols rather than literal language to convey its teaching. Since a symbol cannot symbolize itself, it must always symbolize something else, that is, a beast is not to be understood as a literal beast but as the symbol of some power or force. There are two sets of symbols in the book. One of them represents the forces of wickedness and the other, the forces of righteousness. Or to say it another way, one set depicts the devil and his host at work and the other, the Lord and His army. These two forces meet in a great conflict (just as good and evil are always in a conflict). At times it may appear that evil is going to win the battle, to defeat good and crush it under its feet. But not so. God is still in control, and in the final outcome right always wins. Thus we believe the Lord is saying to His persecuted and downtrodden saints, "Keep faithful in the battle and the victory is yours." If this is the case, Revelation is simply saying, "You are in a battle you cannot lose." God is on our side and we cannot ultimately be defeated.

The best summary of this view that we have seen is a little story told by Vance Havner. He said. "The old bootblack in the barber shop was a familiar figure with his Bible always lying close at hand when he was not reading it. One day a customer said to him, 'I see you're reading the Book of Revelation today. Do you understand it?'

" 'Yes, sir, I know what it means.'

" 'You know what it means when Bible scholars have disagreed about it all these years! What do you think it means?'

" 'It means that Jesus is gonna win!' " Precisely! And so are His saints. Thus the heart and message of Revelation is stated in 17:14: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

BOOKS WE LOVE (3)

There is no doubt in our minds but that one of the most fascinating stories in the history of man is the movement to restore first-century Christianity to the modern world. The movement took root here in America around 1800. Its success for the first half century of its existence is unprecedented on American soil. And because of its ready reception and rapid spread, the pioneers in the movement soon became convinced that it was destined to take the world for Christ — to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Its basic plea was for all Christians to come out of everything that had been started since apostolic times and be united in one grand harmonious body upon the ground of one inspired book. The theories of denominationalism were devastated by its onslaughts; the doctrines and opinions of men in religious matters crumbled under the power of truth; creeds were abandoned for the Bible and the Bible alone as the only authoritative rule of faith and practice; the unscriptural organizations of denominationalism gave way to the simple congregational organization of the New Testament church; human names were dropped for divine ones under the slogan, "Bible names for Bible things"; human wisdom (mostly traditional) was replaced with Bible knowledge; the God degrading doctrine of predestination (God determining before the world began who would be saved and who would be lost) was rejected for free will; emotionalism was replaced by the rational — in short, to return to the Bible and follow its instructions in everything pertaining to religion, to build churches exactly like the church in the first century, the same name, doctrine, organization, and means of entrance, was an idea whose time had come. The unity for which Christ prayed was at last on the verge of becoming a reality.

But, alas! something happened. Some of the most powerful leaders in the movement became convinced that the Bible was not a sufficient guide and to follow it as the only rule of faith and practice was too primitive for modern man, to unite all on the truth of the gospel was not practical, to be the church of Christ in all its purity in the midst of denominationalism was not possible, to wear only Bible names was not desirable, to be silent where the Bible is silent was not popular and was too restrictive, to be Christians only was too exclusive, and to be like the church described in the Bible was too antiquated. As a result of abandoning the original plea, division came. The movement which had started out to unite all Christians in one body divided and splintered beyond conception. But thanks be to God, a scattered few picked up the pieces, stayed with the original plea, and as a result undenominational Christianity has again become a powerful force in the world.

This amazing story is told in great detail in a fantastic set of books (currently in three volumes, but a fourth is in preparation) called *The Search for the Ancient Order* by Earl I. West. We purchased this set soon after we obeyed the gospel and have read it time and again. We love it for many reasons, but basically because of the beauty, clarity, and completeness with which it covers the history of the Restoration Movement. In our judgment, no one who is interested in the plea to restore New Testament Christianity, the principles involved and the men who preached them, can afford to be without these books. They are built around the men who led the movement, and they tell how it grew . . . and then floundered, and how those who retained the original plea gathered up the fragments and rebuilt on the solid foundation of God's eternal truth.

We love this set so much that were we forced to part with all our library except five works, *The Search for the Ancient Order* would be among those retained. We would, therefore, like to see them read by every Christian, and most certainly by everyone who wishes to be informed about our heritage in the religious world.

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Clayton Pepper, Editor

The Church of Christ in Duncan 1933-1985

Paul Rogers, Duncan, S.C.

The Lord's church had its beginning in 1933 in an era when friends would invite other friends to spend a week at their home and attend a gospel meeting. The Boyd Wests of Moore, S.C., invited the Robert Rodgers of Duncan to visit for just such a purpose. This was a trip of 12 miles in a two-horse wagon. During the meeting, the Rodgers family obeyed the good news of Christ.

The late H.M. Dodson, a plumber by trade, preached the first gospel sermon in the Duncan area. The people sat under a walnut tree with pews of carpenter's benches and rough boards for the seats.

Brother Dodson was preaching at Moore on weekends but saw the opportunity and agreed to preach regularly in the Duncan area on Sunday afternoons. Samuel and May Bell Eggelston soon obeyed the gospel which gave the congregation a membership of five. The schedule of services was Saturday, 7:30 p.m. Bible study; Sunday, 10:00 a.m., Bible study and the Lord's Supper; and Sunday, 3:00 p.m., preaching. The living rooms of the Rodgers and Eggelstons were the places of worship, respectively — approximately 12 feet by 14 feet each. Usually from 20 to 35 attended.

Mrs. Mary Hughes gave the church a small tract of land on a dead-end road on which to raise a church building. The neighbors gave the trees that were used for lumber. There was a wonderful spirit of cooperation as the brethren from Moore and Judson (now Edgewood), in Greenville, gave of their time and money to help the Duncan congregation. This work was done after everyone had finished their regular work-day. This building has since been converted into the minister's residence.

The congregation was served in the beginning by godly men who worked a secular occupation to support their families and came here on the weekend to preach. Those who served this way were: H.M. Dodson, Brady Green, Homer Craft, and R.G. Moreland. Brother Moreland became the first "full-time" preacher, followed by Paul D. Burch, B. Edward Davis, P.L. Manning, Milton S. Parker, J. Rudy Senn, Roy Burgess, Sr., Raymond Climer, Howard Winters, Randy Lawless, and the current minister, J. Terry Wheeler.

The congregation has been blessed with men qualified for the eldership. The first appointed were Samuel Eggelston and Broadus A. Graydon. Others that have served in the office were Paul Burch, Spencer Kelly, Delacey Phillips, Elmer Smith, and Carl Hudson. The church is now under the oversight of Otis Burch, Oscar P. Craft, J.W. DeYoung, and Paul Rodgers.

Those who have served as deacons are Henry Bailey, J.W. DeYoung, Woodrow Lee, Paul Rodgers, D.W. Phillips, Spencer Kelly, Otis Burch, Harold Barnett, Jr., Delacey Phillips, C.B. Leonard, Jerry Fortenberry, Walker Fortenberry, David Nelson, Stanley Nelson, Milton McCarty, Roy Burgess, Jr., and Jim Hendrick. The current deacons are Marvin Knighton, Bruce McGuinty, Elmer Smith, and Harold Smith.

Of the original two families, three remain today as faithful members of the church at Duncan: Mary Harrelson, Eleanor Miller, and Paul Rodgers. The church itself has grown to approximately 125 members.

As the congregation grew, some land was acquired for a larger building which was erected in 1955. The structure is about one-quarter of a mile from the original site. In 1977, a fellowship building was constructed, and in 1983, 2.17 acres of land were bought for the future growth of the congregation.

There are two men who grew up under the influence of the Duncan church who are now full-time gospel preachers: Joseph W. DeYoung, preacher for the Manson church in Manson, Canada, and R. Leland Rodgers, who preaches for the Hartford Ave. church in Ponca City, OK.

The Lord's people at Duncan have been challenged by a budget for 1985 of $1020.00 per week. This budget includes assisting a new congregation in Orangeburg (Garden City), a new work in Charleston in cooperation with the church there, and support for the church in Manson, Canada. Other works include the **Duncan Messenger** which is mailed to every home in Duncan every two months, a weekly bulletin, Bible correspondence courses, an active benevolence program, and a Dial-A-Devotion available to the public 24 hours a day. The preacher and others conduct home Bible studies with members and non-members on a regular basis.

God has blessed Duncan over the years with a wonderful group of preachers who made the gospel known without fear or favor, and with dedicated elders who stood on the word of God and guarded the folk. As a result, the church has remained true to the Lord's teaching and no error has entered into this congregation.

The future looks bright with a congregation of God's people who love each other. The Duncan church certainly does and has an attitude of cooperation, and a love for the lost to go with it.

God Uses a Prisoner

T. Douglas Couch, Asheboro, N.C.

Obsessed with the thought of preaching Christ in Rome, Paul begged Roman Christians to pray for that opportunity (Rom. 15:30,32). Paul had assumed that he would travel to Rome a free man. However, God had other plans. To Paul the Lord said, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." (Acts 23:11.) Following his arrest at Jerusalem on Pentecost (the autumn of AD 58) and his two-year imprisonment at Caesarea (Acts 24:27), Paul was transported at state expense and arrived in Rome in the spring of AD 61. Though Paul's mobility was extremely limited by being under house arrest, his opportunities to preach were multiplied. Three days passed and this famous Roman called for the leading Jewish citizens of Rome. A specific appointment was secured, and on that day, Paul convinced some of his countrymen to obey the gospel (Acts 28:24).

Living in a rented house for two years (Acts 28:30), Paul was chained to a Roman soldier. Uniform custom dictated a change of guard every three hours. Thus, it was possible for five or six different soldiers to hear Paul's preaching every day. They had to listen, for Paul told the Jews, ". . . I am bound with this chain." (Acts 28:20.) Deep impressions were made in the minds of these special soldiers; so much so that they even discussed Paul's teaching among themselves. "My bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard." (Phil. 1:13.) These elite soldiers were also charged with guarding the emperor. It is highly probable that some of these men even passed the gospel within Caesar's family (Phil. 4:22).

An unknown political prisoner from a small country carried the gospel to the center of the world: Rome. Though he was bound, his words were not.

God can grant the same opportunities today. Illness, economics, and old age prove to be small barriers indeed when God sees fit to use us. Man's limitations truly become God's opportunities.

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Will It Work?

Barry Fike, Hickory, N.C.

A few months ago I wrote an article discussing the possibility of congregations beginning a vital literature program in laundromats and grocery stores. The main idea was to plant a seed in the minds of brethren honestly searching for ways and means to spread the word to all of the area that surrounds them.

Will it work? In March we began a program that only had ten tract racks, six of which were stolen. Not letting this dishearten us, we continued to look and work, and we now have six laundromats opened to us, two barber shops, one bus stop, and one grocery store. All of these businesses have at least a tract rack if not a large literature rack.

But, will it work? This year, at least since March, we have handed out 6,213 tracts and 25,229 pieces of literature. As of yet, no great numbers of people have called concerning the truth, but some Bible studies have been set up and who knows how much seed for the truth has been planted by this simple method?

If you're interested in setting up a program similar to this, but don't know where to start, please call me at 328-1539 or 397-5040, and I will be glad to help in any way possible.

Respect for Others

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, N.C.

Fundamental to getting along with another person is **mutual** respect. Let us be challenged to treat others right (Matt. 22:39; 7:12). Yet, if we are inconsiderate, proud, or selfish, we will neglect, offend, or disrespect others.

We readily agree that lying, cheating, dishonesty, and murder are absolutely sin. But in matters of immaturity, we are quick to make excuses allowing the immature behavior to go on without the challenge to grow. Consider these disrespectful actions of immaturity:

1. Taking another for granted and thus taking advantage of them.
2. Abusing another for our own benefit, even to get our own way.
3. Being rude to another, and thus having no consideration for their feelings. Also, becoming ill-mannered, even mean, "picking on" folks or "running them down."

This is not just found in children, either! All of us violate our loving relationships: the brethren, family, neighbors, friends, even strangers. It is not that we cannot laugh and have fun with one another. We need that (Prov. 15:13; 17:22). Yet, we are not to do it to the hurt of another; there is a proper time for it (Eccl. 3:4). It is not that we should not expect others to treat us right; but we should not manipulate and demand it (1 Cor. 13:4-5). We need to grow up, learn to be thoughtful and caring.

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Evidences That Prove the Bible Is of Divine Origin

Terry Wheeler, Duncan, S.C.

1. The consistency of the theme of the Bible is proof:

The Bible is a composite of 66 books, literary works of about 40 men whose lives span 1,500 years in human history. The occupations of the 40 men varied, as did their backgrounds and life-styles. They were priests, lawyers, doctors, fishermen, farmers, tax collectors, statesmen, government historians, preachers, soldiers, rulers, shepherds, etc. Yet their works fit as a totality into one consistent theme, no part contradictory, but rather complementary to the others. Each work is involved either directly or indirectly in the presentation and development of the one theme — the Messiah, the Lord and Creator of all, is Savior of the world, who is Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.

2. The harmony of detail is further proof:

The main theme is developed within each of the 66 books by various sub-themes and developmental references. The details used to elaborate these sub-themes and references are consistent within each work. Not only is this so, but the slightest detail of each work is consistent with the detail of every other work, weaving a remarkable unity that is totally complete and indestructible. To refuse the smallest part of any of the writings is to refuse it all.

3. Prophecy fulfilled:

Whole detailed accounts of future events are given well in advance of their fulfillment. Both **Daniel** and **Isaiah** are excellent, irrefutable proofs of such accounts. Daniel 2 speaks of the kingdom of God or the church rising in the days of the Roman Empire, while Isaiah 53 speaks of the life, sufferings, death, burial and resurrection of the Christ. Both of these prophesies were known and copied at least 200 years prior to their recorded fulfillment!

4. The subject matter of the good news of Jesus Christ itself points to divine authorship:

When compared to pre- and post-existent narratives, the gospel theme stands too high to be a creation of man. It is too holy and selfless, especially when one considers the theme to involve the love and concern of deity toward man. The Creator willingly takes a house of flesh with all weaknesses attached thereto, living to help all men incessantly, living in weakness and poverty, Himself now a slave to deity — the Father in heaven. He is rejected by those whom He sought to help, crucified and killed, and then raised from the dead to the Father's right hand to rule over the entire creation. His faithful witnesses proclaim light and fellowship and love and life, in His sacrifice, to the ones who had Him killed, the witnesses themselves suffering at the hands of men, while the King promises to return and to judge all men according to their deeds. Evil man exposed so fully, yet forgiven so freely! Where in the annals of human literature can any comparable work be found?

5. The claim that the Bible makes for itself is that it is God's word, and the claim is logically presented and thoroughly substantiated:

The Book itself claims to be the living words of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; Gal. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:37). It is substantiated by eyewitness accounts of miracles and signs given to confirm the truth of what was spoken and recorded (1 Cor. 15:1-8; Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:3-4; Acts 10:39-41; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; 1 John 1:1-4) which none of the enemies of the cross could ever deny (Acts 4:15-16, 21-22). Also, related historical data is given to assure the reader of the accuracy of the accounts, especially in Luke and Acts (Luke 1:1-4; 2:1-2; 3:1-2; Acts 11:28; 18:12).

6. The Book gives the factual analysis of man:

Men are presented as they truly are,

with no attempt to excuse or glorify hurtful actions. Man is graphically portrayed as he is physically, psychologically, socially, and religiously. Every aspect of human thinking from the cradle to the grave is factually presented and thoroughly examined; and it is related in a practical, understandable presentation.

7. The workings of natural law and man's dealings with nature are presented accurately:

The Bible presents the universe and its laws with scientific accuracy, while refusing the unscientific concepts which shroud the thinking of superstitious man. Though written in literary rather than scientific terms, the writings not only refused to bow to the supposed scientific notions popular in the days of the writers, but also expressed true concepts of natural law and order unheard of in those days, such as spherical earth (Isa. 40:22), quarantine (Lev. 13:4, 46), the nature of light (Job 38:19-20), dung to be refused (Deut. 23:12-14), necessity of cleanliness (Lev. 15), the water cycle (Amos 9:6), etc.

8. The lack of any logically substantiated argument against the Bible is further proof:

That which is brought to bear against the book to disprove its trustworthiness shows itself to the investigator to be either assumption and ignorance, or flagrant distortion of the truth, i.e., a tampering with either scientific fact, history, or the text; or all of this.

9. The one hundred percent preservation of the completed Hebrew and Greek text, the whole being 2,000 years old, proves the divine authority of the Bible:

The Bible is the best preserved work of literary history, having more evidence of exact manuscript content than any other ancient document. Even the passages declared to be additions by some only compliment that which we **know** to have been in the original 2,000-year-old text. Amazing preservation!

10. The total fulfillment achieved by those who consistently trust its contents and the destructive fulfillment accomplished by those who consistently disobey it is another proof:

This test daily proclaims the trust of the Bible. Total enjoyment for life and total fulfillment for every need of man is found by believing and obeying the message of Christ; only frustrating temporary pleasure is accomplished by disobedience. The more persistent the disobedience becomes, the more complete becomes the destruction of the lust-corrupted life. This test never fails.

11. The answer to any question practical to the life and betterment of man is found in the Book:

Whatever question man may have about himself, the Bible presents the answer in a full, practical manner. Whatever scientific research may produce in revealing what man needs to progress in his humanity, whatever may be discovered as helpful to individual and social growth, it is found already revealed in the pages of Holy Scripture, expressing the fullest possible benefit.

12. A complete, unanswerable defense is given against any belief that is contrary to the knowledge of God and His supremacy, a defense which can be logically formulated and wholly substantiated:

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life-style that challenges Christ as Lord or man as made in His image can stand under the divine battery. All fall impotent before the knowledge contained within the Bible as darkness flees to the shadows under the rays of light. The philosophy will be found to be inconsistent, the counsel foolishness, the religion vain, and the life-style unfulfilling with tendencies toward destruction, if they are found to be out of harmony with the philosophy, counsel, religion, and life-style taught in the Bible.

13. The witness of unrelated historical data testifies to the veracity of the Bible:

A mound of testimony gathered from times contemporary with Bible history points to agreement with what is set forth as historical fact within the books' pages. Even hostile witnesses concur with the facts set forth in Scripture, including Pliny and Tacitus, two pagan officials of the Roman government. Tacitus was an historian of the first century, and Pliny (the younger) was a governor of Bithynia under the Emperor Trajan around the early part of the second century. Both were hostile to Christianity, and both help confirm the Bible as historical fact.

Obviously the presentation of each reason given here has not been exhaustive, nor does this treatise present all reasons for concluding that the Bible is a product of divine rather than human authorship. Nevertheless, the most casual reader can be assured beyond doubt that the Bible is what it claims to be: the living, forever enduring word of the All-powerful God, and is due all the fear, authority and trust that such a claim demands. May God be praised for His wonderous Book, given to men!

Fishing and Evangelism

Garry W. Ferrell, Mauldin, S.C.

Luke 5:1-11. The inspired historian Luke records one of our Lord's fantastic miracles in the fifth chapter of his account of the Gospel. A great number of lessons can be learned through an advanced study of this text, and the Christian who desires to please his Lord will be admonished to greater efforts in the kingdom if he will spend some time in this text.

Peter, James and John had been on the lake of Gennesaret fishing all night, to no avail. When Jesus saw them, they were washing their nets, and he asked Peter to carry him a distance from the shore in Peter's boat. From the shallows of the lake Jesus taught many lessons to those persons upon the shore. After His discourses, He directed Peter to "launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Peter's response is quite interesting. "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing," remarked Peter. A lack of confidence that any fish will be taken is apparent in Peter's words, yet because it was Jesus who issued the command, he obeyed. So large was the catch that another boat was required to help hold the fish, and even then, the boats were so overloaded that they began to sink from the weight of the fish. Peter was so ashamed of having doubted the power of the Lord that he "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

This writer believes that one of the main purposes of this miracle and the events that surround it was to instill in Peter, and the other disciples nearby, deep confidence that their future evangelistic efforts were going to be filled with success through the power and might of the Lord. Jesus closes this conversation with, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." There is no room for doubt in the Master's words, but a strong assurance of their success.

Brethren, we ought not to doubt when it comes to doing what the Lord has told us to do. In the area of evangelism or in any other area, we need to be confident that we can fulfill the words of the Lord. Never has Deity directed man to do anything that is impossible. The Great Commission (Matt.

28:18-20) was not directed in words that leave room for doubt. The assurance that we will meet with success in evangelism is evident in the passage, and the assurance is presented thusly, ". . . and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [age]. Amen." We ought to be more ashamed than Peter was if we doubt that we can accomplish what God has directed us to do, because we have so much more to assure us than Peter had (John 20:30-31). All was not written when Peter doubted, neither had the Lord been long in His ministry. Not that Peter was to be excused, but that we, even more so, should not be excused. And even if there is some doubt in our minds, we ought to do as Peter and carry out the command because it is the Lord Jesus who has given it.

Principles Common With Fishing and Evangelism

1. A good fisherman knows what bait to use. If he wants to catch Bass, he will use bait conducive to catching Bass. Evangelists should not attempt to catch a soul without the proper bait — the gospel. The gospel catches Christians. Nothing else will do. The gospel is the only bait that will do, because it is the real thing. A good fisherman knows that the best bait is the real thing. Often when he is attempting to catch fish, to no avail, with artificial bait, he will use a natural scent spray on the artificial bait. This gives the artificial bait the essence of the real thing. How different do some of our evangelists act. When they are being unsuccessful at catching men with the real thing, they will try to sugar coat the gospel with artificial aromas to attract men. When they are successful in attracting these men, however, they find that such rarely make Christians. Alas, they have caught something else!

2. A good fisherman fishes at the proper depth and time. Fishermen on Lake Michigan use three types of tackle when trolling. They use equipment that will catch fish near the surface, they use equipment that will catch fish three feet below the surface and they use "down riggers" to catch fish six feet and deeper. A good evangelist knows that all men are not on the same level spiritually or academically, and so they adapt their approach and tools to the level the person is on.

3. A good fisherman also realizes that fish are tempermental creatures. They react differently during different times of the year and during adverse weather conditions. A good evangelist knows that people are also tempermental creatures. They act differently during different times of the day and under adverse social and physical conditions. They, like the fish, may not be interested in the bait at first approach, but at a more conducive time, they might be interested.

4. A good fisherman never gives up. This writer (who loves to fish) has never known a good fisherman to give up on a fishing hole because he did not get a nibble one day, because he managed to get some in only half-way, or because all he got was nibbles. A good fisherman will keep trying and trying. When he goes, he knows: (a) he is not going to catch all the fish in the lake; (b) he might make several trips before he lands one; (c) some will just nibble and others will only be brought half-way to the boat. Let's be good fishers of men.

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The Holy Spirit and Illumination

Howard Winters, West Jefferson, N.C.

Denominationalism, which to begin with is a departure from God's plan of unity, has invented some basic false doctrines, and then they use the basic false doctrines as foundations upon which to build many other false doctrines. When this is the case, the only reason to believe the second doctrine is because it logically grows out of the first (which is false to start with). An example of this can be seen in its erroneous concept of how the Holy Spirit works in conversion and sanctification. It concludes that the Spirit works directly (apart from the divine word or any other means) to convert sinners. After one is converted by a direct miraculous work of the Spirit, He then indwells the Christian personally in order to enpower, lead, guide, and illuminate him. Here our purpose is to note only illumination, which is the logical outgrowth of the false concept of the direct work of the Spirit in a Christian. (Make no mistake about it: the Holy Spirit works in a Christian but He does so through, and only through, the means of divinely revealed truth.)

But what is the denominational concept of illumination? While it may vary in degree from person to person, most would agree essentially with the following definition of it, given by Louis Gaussen in his great book called **Divine Inspiration of the Bible:** "The Holy Ghost in all ages enlightens the elect by his powerful inward virtue; he testifies to them of Christ; gives them the unction of the Holy One; teaches them all things, and convinces them of all truth." That is to say that in some mysterious way the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind pertaining to the will of God, and that in a direct or immediate way, without the means of the word of God or human reason. This illumination (a concept that is barely short of revelation) of Christian by the Spirit is believed by all denominational people we have known, in one form or another. It comes out in such concepts as the Spirit putting words into the mouth of preachers, leading one into the right place at the right time, forewarning one of danger by impressing it upon the heart or mind, telling one by intuition what to do, where to go, what to say, nudging one in the direction of God's will, revealing what is right when one would not otherwise know the right (e.g., when and where for a preacher to move, who to marry, whether to witness to a certain person or not), etc., none of which is ever set forth in the Scriptures as the work of the Holy Spirit after the miraculous ceased.

But what Scriptures are used to prove or substantiate illumination? None, none whatsoever directly, because it is not a Scriptural concept. As we said above, it is the logical outgrowth of a false concept of the work of the Holy Spirit, namely, that He works directly (and almost miraculously — and some would call it a miracle) to lead and guide all Christians into the truth. Thus back of illumination, and necessary to its acceptance, is a false concept of the work of the Spirit in revealing the truth. To see the erroneousness of illumination, it is necessary only to see the truth on two aspects of the subject:

1. The work of the Holy Spirit in divine revelation. The Scriptural function of the Spirit (working through chosen men) was to take the content of the divine mind and reveal it to the mind of man. How did He do this? He took the divine mind (or will) and put it into words and by the words, communicated the will of God to the mind of man. This was done miraculously through chosen men (the apostles of Christ and those upon whom they conveyed the power to divinely deliver the truth). Every passage that is ordinarily used for illumination is a passage that has reference to the work of the Holy Spirit through chosen

men, not His work in all Christians. See such passages as John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8-13. When one understands that these passages have reference to the miraculous work of revealing and delivering the truth through the apostles (that truth being now revealed and delivered in the written word of God), there is absolutely no Scriptural grounds for the doctrine of illumination — it is a false doctrine that has logically grown out of another false doctrine.

2. The Holy Spirit reveals the divine will now through, and only through, the written word. But because denominationalism has, for the most part, rejected this, it goes off on another tangent in order to show that illumination is necessary. It says that the revealed word cannot be understood without a direct enlightening by the Spirit. This false concept is based upon a total misapprehension of 1 Corinthians 2:14, where Paul says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Paul's point is not that the word or will of God, once it has been delivered, cannot be understood, but that man apart from revelation (the word) cannot know that will. In 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 he shows that man by his own unaided knowledge, wisdom, and reason cannot know the will of God — that is, he can never find out God's will by his own process of reason and logic. In 1 Corinthians 2:1-16 he shows that God's will can be known only by divine revelation. The natural man of 2:14 is thus not a Christian man or even a non-Christian **per se;** he is a man without revelation. Paul's point is that without revelation man cannot know God's will. But God has revealed His will to man by the Holy Spirit through chosen men. Before He revealed it, it was a mystery (something man could not know or find out by his unaided reason) but after He revealed it, it is revelation. And the very purpose of revelation is that man may know God's will (Eph. 3:1-7). Thus to say that man needs illumination before he can understand revelation is to say that which the Scriptures give no trace of; in fact, it is to say that which is contrary to Scripture. It is a false doctrine that has no foundation but another false doctrine.

We now have the Bible which is divinely inspired of God (that is, it was delivered to us by the Holy Spirit through chosen men). It was given to us for the very purpose of revealing His will to us. And the only way we can ever know that will is by studying the inspired word. It was never the purpose of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the mind of man by illumination; His purpose was to deliver to the human mind the will of God, clothed in words chosen by the Spirit Himself. When the word is delivered (as it now is in the Scriptures) the work of the Spirit ends and that of man begins. If he is to ever know the will of God (since that will has been delivered to him in the word) he must do so by exercising his own understanding, not by some humanly trumped up concept that says the Spirit must now directly reveal internally (illuminate) what He has already directly delivered externally (in the word of truth).

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Vacation Bible School

Bobby Duncan, Adamsville, ALA

It has been said that vacation Bible school is some of the hardest church work that can be done, and I would not disagree with that observation. In view of this fact, some may wonder, "Is it really worth it?" We are convinced that it is, and for the following reasons.

1. One of the greatest needs in this generation is for a better knowledge of the Bible. In the Old Testament, God said that His people were destroyed for a lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6). Ignorance is destructive today, just as it was then. Only by knowing the truth can people be made free (John 8:32). We are commanded to study (2 Tim. 2:15). There is no doubt that a concentrated period of Bible study each night for a week will be beneficial to us in knowing more about the will of God. Not only will it help us to a greater knowledge, but it will help whet our appetites so that we will want to study more than we have in the past privately.

2. A VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL provides an opportunity for us to instill principles of truth and righteousness in the minds of our children. It is true that a vacation Bible school cannot substitute for Bible study on a regular basis in the home; neither can it substitute for regular attendance at Bible classes throughout the year. But it does give an opportunity we do not have at other times to spend an hour or so five nights in succession, with a qualified and prepared teacher, studying one theme, with several other students in the same age group. This is an opportunity that each parent should recognize the value of, and see that his child is not deprived of this great advantage.

3. VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL can be a great tool in evangelism. There is perhaps no other activity of the church in which it is possible to get more outsiders to participate than in a vacation Bible school. Very few outsiders attend our gospel meetings, but it is possible to get many – especially children – to come to our vacation Bible schools. Many times impressions are made that are lasting, and which will eventually lead to the salvation of souls. Last year, while I was in California for the Visalia Lectureship, I met a fine gospel preacher, brother Steve Orduno. As several of us preachers were having lunch at a local restaurant, I was making conversation with Steve, and asked him where he was from, and something about his background. He told the following story:

As a young married man, Steve and some of his pals were "killing off" a bottle of vodka around the kitchen table, late at night. Steve's wife had already gone to bed, but Steve was taken away from his pals in the kitchen several times by the crying of his two-year-old daughter. He finally said to himself: "It's just not fair for this little girl to be brought up in this kind of home. What I do with my own life is my business, but I have no right to force my life-style on this precious little girl." He told his wife that they really should get started to church. Steve had been reared a Catholic; his wife had been reared a Baptist. She did not want to go to the Catholic church with him, and when they finally started to church some months later, the Baptist church where they went did not appeal to them.

Steve's wife had been reared in Detroit, Michigan. As they were talking about where to go to church, she remembered having gone to a vacation Bible school as a small girl. And her reflections on that VBS were quite pleasant. She did not remember what kind of church it was, but she did remember that the people were warm and friendly. She remembered also that they must have been poor people, for they didn't even have a piano to accompany their singing. Then she remembered that somewhere in her possessions she had a New Testament, which had been given her during that VBS by the lovely lady who taught her class. She searched until she found that New Testament, and by reading the inscription on the inside, learned that the vacation Bible school had been in a church of Christ. Steve and his wife decided to look up the church of Christ in their own city in California, and attend its services. Steve and his good family are now giving their lives in service to the Master.

An interesting epilog to that story is that the particular congregation in Detroit where this little girl was given the New Testament was dissolved, and Steve and his wife were not able to find any trace of the good lady who had given her the New Testament. Several years later Steve was attending a lectureship in Tennessee, and met a man from the Detroit area. In conversation with Steve, the man learned about the circumstances surrounding Steve's conversion, and he told Steve, "Wait right here." In a moment he returned with his wife, and asked Steve to tell her the story. As Steve told the story, tears began to roll down the cheeks of this lady. Her own mother, who was now already in heaven, was the good lady who had given away the New Testament.

The above story is true, and it illustrates the potential of VBS.

Obey Your Parents

Bill Griffin, Spartanburg, S.C.

The young often think of parents as being out of step with the modern world. Praise God! They should be. The Bible is filled with references concerning the end of those who follow the way of the world. Paul warns to avoid the way of the world, and Jesus declares the path of the world will lead to destruction.

Paul writes, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' — which is the first commandment with a promise — 'that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.' " (Eph. 6:1-3, NIV.) Three reasons are proposed in this passage why children should obey their Christian parents. A closer look at these reasons provides the child of God help in understanding obedience to parents.

The first reason Paul gives children for obeying parents is simply "this is right." It is not always easy to select the right path, and especially with so many options and so many directions pulling a young person. Christian parents will do the best they can to provide good paths for their children. To obey Christian parents is right because the Bible instructs clearly on the subject. Paul

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uses Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 to make the point that obeying parents is a commandment and right in the sight of God.

Paul, secondly, claims in the passage that obeying parents will assure "that it may go well with you." The child who is obedient will be in a good or worthy manner with the Lord. There is no claim that all problems vanish. The Lord makes the rain come on the good and evil. You can be assured that God takes care of His own, and heeding the warnings and advice of your parents will make things go well for you.

Christian parents want only the best for their children. A father will not give his son a snake for a fish, and neither will a parent in the Lord harm his child. Knowing the love of your parents, obeying them and their teaching will cause you to please the Lord.

Thirdly, Paul states, "that you may enjoy long life on the earth." To have possession throughout the duration of your existence on earth is the promise made. The quality and quantity of life will be happy for the Lord.

Why should the child obey the parents? Because the Bible says "this is right, that it may go well with you," and "that you may enjoy long life on the earth." God has provided so very much for us, and loving Christian parents must be obeyed if the child of God wishes to obey Him. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.

Carolina Church News

NEWS BRIEFS

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports directly to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. All corespondents should note that the Rock Hill Post Office Box has been discontinued. Items for publication must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Sylva. Bob Rigdon has produced a series of video tapes which deal with mental health from a Biblical perspective. These tapes are available for purchase or rent. Brother Rigdon is a gospel preacher and a professor of Counseling at Western Carolina University.

Charlotte. Jerry Laxson is the new preacher for the Westside church. The Laxsons moved to Charlotte from Sweetwater, Tennessee.

Charlotte. Providence Road church reports mission assistance in January to six places, totaling $2300.

Brevard. Elders have been appointed. They are Quentin Clark, Warren Cline and Ernest Thigpen.

High Point. A gospel meeting is scheduled for May 12-15 with Bill Davidson of Columbus, Georgia preaching at the Eastchester congregation.

Advance. The Redland church now has a new auditorium and additional classrooms. An Open House was held April 7 with Stanley Crews as the guest speaker.

Hickory. Brad Brumley conducted a "Skills-building Workshop for Church Leaders and Bible Teachers" March 22-24.

Hendersonville. Wayne Scott of Florence, Alabama and a student at Freed-Hardeman College has been invited to work with the church this summer.

N.C. Conversions

Providence Rd., Charlotte, 4; Northview, Statesville, 1; Wilmington, 1; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 1; W. Jefferson 2, Bell Fork, Jacksonville, 10. Total: 19.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Bishopville. Claude Smith, formerly the preacher for the Plaza church in Sumter, is now engaged in starting a new work in Bishopville. This is in Lee County where no church of Christ has previously existed. The St. Andrews Road church in Columbia is overseeing this work. Financial help is needed. Contact brother Smith at 401 Alice Court, Sumter, SC 29150.

Greenville. Northeast has appointed six additional deacons.

Rock Hill. Dowell Flatt preached in a series in March. A new attendance record was set with 318 on Friday night. Average attendance for the week was 240. There were seven responses for prayer and sixteen baptisms during the six-day meeting and the following Sunday.

S.C. Conversions

Fairview, Spartanburg, 2; N. Charleston 1; Northeast, Taylors, 3; Central, Spartanburg, 1; Myrtle Beach 4; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill 18. Total 29.

Fairview, Spartanburg

BILL GRIFFIN, Reporting: The Fairview congregation had a brief, three-day meeting February 8-10 with Glenn "Rooster" Cogburn from Avery, Texas. Two baptisms and eight restorations were the result. We invite all to our next meeting with Terry Wheeler from the Duncan Church of Christ the week of May 19-24.

Ethiopia

Additional churches reporting contributions for famine relief in Ethiopia are Albemarle, North Carolina, $328.75 and Hendersonville, North Carolina, $5,000.

BACKFIRE

Letters to the Editor

Brother Winters:

Your answer to the questions on abortion and birth control has rekindled an issue in my mind that I have had to wrestle with in my own Christian life. . . . Due to my profession (anesthesia), abortion has been an issue for me to confront in actual involvement. Prior to recommitting myself to Christ, I participated in these atrocities without reservation. Upon returning to the church, I had to face the reality that I was a murderer and must make some hard and fast decisions about the issue of abortion. After an extensive and prayerful search for the truth I came to my conclusion. For me, even though there was a strong desire to find some way to justify it, I was forced to conclude that there is **no** justification for abortion for any reason.

I do, however, continue to ponder that extremely rare case (as you so accurately refer to it) where either the mother or child must be sacrificed to save one or the other. I thank God that during my years in medicine I have never been exposed nor do I have personal knowledge of such being necessary. I think, due to the tremendous advancements in the area of obstetrics, such an occurrence in modern medicine is near nonexistent.

Please bear with me as I now share a second conclusion of mine. To set the stage, let me rephrase one of the questions you answered, namely, "Is not abortion a form of birth control?" to "Is not birth control a form of abortion?" Let me quickly clarify by inserting the word "some" birth control.

In my investigation I concluded and I feel that you would concur (based on some statements in your article) that life begins at conception (when the male sperm unites with the female ovum). If this is the case, any intervention by man past this point to control birth would of necessity have to be labeled abortion. Several modern-day techniques of birth control function, not to prevent conception, but to prevent life from being sustained after conception has occurred. For example:

The IUD. This mechanical device is placed into the woman's womb to act as a foreign body to basically do two things: (1) cause an embryo that has been conceived in the normal fashion not to be able to attach in the womb once it arrives there; (2) if implantation does occur, however, this device will at some point early in the pregnancy cause it not to remain viable and thus also be discharged.

I heartily agree that we must use reason in our procreation, and acceptable birth control is a necessity. I would, however, encourage Christians to use those methods of birth control that prevent conception and are not abortive in nature. Such methods fall into two classes: 1. Those selective in nature. These include prophylactic devices and abstention for the few days each month that the female is fertile. 2. Those permanent in nature, which includes tubal ligation and vasectomy. — Rocky Hoover, Sumter, S.C.

We certainly agree with brother Hoover that any form of birth control that destroys life (after it is conceived) rather than preventing its conception is totally and absolutely unacceptable. Human life, even in its first moments of being, must be respected and protected.

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I consider **Upreach** and **Carolina Christian** to be the best of the brotherhood publications. — Bill Griffin, Spartanburg, S.C.

Well, that certainly puts *Upreach* in good company!

Dear Howard:

The good accomplished by **Carolina Christian** is certainly realized in Lexington. We have distributed copies of it to inmates at Central Correctional Institute in Columbia, and it has been a great blessing to them. — Rick Parks, Lexington, S.C.

Another way to put the paper to good use. Wherever it goes it takes the beautiful message of our Savior, Lord, and King.

Dear Howard:

Your review of **Young People and Their Lord** in the January issue of **Carolina Christian** is humbling. Thank you for it. The book is being received better than anything I have ever done. Enclosed is a check for a two-year subscription. I regret not receiving it on a regular basis, for every issue I have ever seen has been a blessing. — Rubel Shelly, Nashville, TN.

Although slightly controversial, Rubel Shelly is making a tremendous impact in our brotherhood, especially on young people. While still a young man, he has a brilliant mind, which is evidenced by the fact that he has already written 25 or 30 popular books. We are glad to welcome him into our fold of regular readers.

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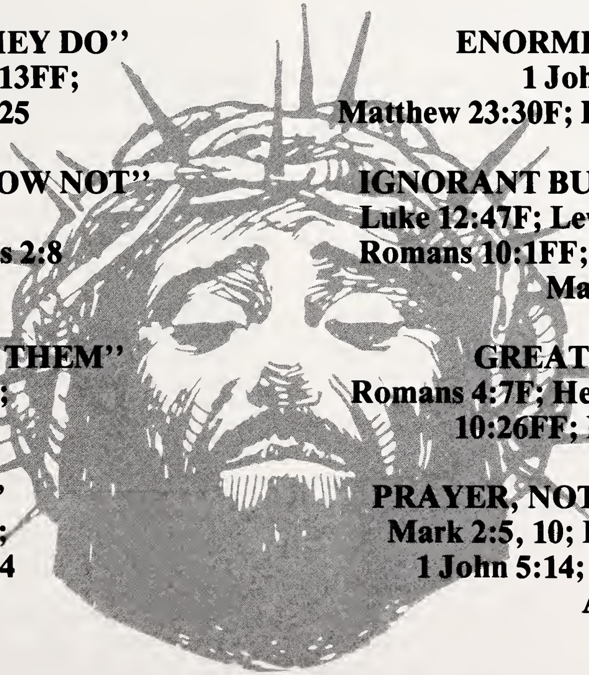
FORGIVE THEM — LUKE 23:34



"WHAT THEY DO"
Acts 2:23; 3:13FF;
Matthew 27:25

"THEY KNOW NOT"
Acts 3:17;
1 Corinthians 2:8

"FORGIVE THEM"
Luke 24:46F;
John 3:17

"FATHER"
John 11:41F;
Matthew 5:44

ENORMITY OF SIN
1 John 3:4; 5:17;
Matthew 23:30F; Hebrews 6:6

IGNORANT BUT GUILTY
Luke 12:47F; Leviticus 5:17;
Romans 10:1FF; Acts 17:13;
Matthew 13:15

GREATEST NEED
Romans 4:7F; Hebrews 8:12;
10:26FF; Romans 2:8

PRAYER, NOT PARDON
Mark 2:5, 10; Luke 7:47F;
1 John 5:14; 2 Peter 3:9;
Acts 2:36FF

— David Pharr (See Page 12)

editorial

THANKS . . . AND KEEP IT UP

In our January issue (1985 — A Crucial Year) we told of our plans to try to expand our services in order to get **Carolina Christian** on a sounder financial footing — to try to get to the place where we would never again have to call for contributions. Two projects we asked you to support were the decision of the Board of Directors to publish our **Commentary on Romans** and the **Directory of Churches of Christ in the Carolinas.** Both projects have been carried out and both books are now available.

Your response to the commentary has been tremendous, almost incredible. Several churches and individuals have purchased it in large numbers (ranging from 10 to 46). Bookstores have begun to stock it. Some are using it in Bible classes or purchasing it for each family in the church. This has made it possible for us to pay the printers (this does not mean that we have sold enough to pay for it, not by a long way, but with what we had in reserve and what has come in has enabled us to get the printers their money).

The directory on the other hand is another story. We received less than a third of the pre-publication orders we usually do on this item. This means that we are far from enough to pay the printers on it (remember we used our reserve on the commentary). We are in trouble on it unless more churches decide late to order them. They are a bargain at $2.00 each or if five or more are purchased at one time, only $1.25 each. Churches should order one for each family (and while you are at it, if you have not already, you might consider giving a commentary also. If 10 or more are ordered at once, you may still have them for $4 each. Or if smaller churches do not have 10 families, they may have them at the same price by ordering for all the families. But this offer cannot be extended indefinitely).

Thanks to your support thus far, things are looking good. But we are not yet out of the woods. So keep your orders coming for the paper, for the commentary and directory, and for all your supplies from the bookstore. Working together we can build a great service institution in **Carolina Christian.**

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

While the conglomerate of modern religious organizations (called churches) has complicated matters by changing and distorting every aspect of the Lord's divine plan, the New Testament concept of the church seems simple enough: it is the people of God who are guided by the will of God (revealed by the Spirit of God in the word of God) to do the work of God. The church of God and the people of God are one and the same. In order to do the work of God, the people of God are formed into independent congregations. Each congregation, in order to function properly, appoints from among its own members elders to rule or

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Howard Winters, Editor; David Pharr, Carolina News Editor; Dennis Conner, Brotherhood News Editor, Johnny Melton, Carolina Pulpit Editor.

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shepherd the flock and deacons to serve in special capacities. Every member is to work within this simple structure (sometimes called organization). The New Testament knows nothing of Christians outside the church (that would be equivalent to being a Christian without being in the family of God, without the new birth). Nor does it know anything of Christians being guided by different creeds (that would imply that the word of God is an insufficient rule of faith and practice). Nor does it know of any such concept of being a Christian and then joining the church (the very same process that makes one a Christian adds him to the Lord's church). All Christians make up the church — and there is no one in it but Christians. One might be a part of a congregation without being a Christian, but he cannot be a part of the Lord's church. Membership in a congregation and membership in the Lord's church may be two entirely different things.

This is not to say that Christians are not a part of a particular congregation. They are . . . or at least they should be because there is no way to function as a member of the body of Christ without functioning through a local congregation (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-27). While they may be in different congregations, Christians are members of the church in the locality where they are. One might move from one area to another, and thus from one congregation to another, but he does not cease to be a member of the church nor does his obligation to function as a part of the body cease. One may withdraw his membership from one congregation and place it with another, but he does not withdraw it from the church (which is made up of all Christians the world over). However, the universal church has no structure, that is, it has no working organization, except the local congregation. The work of the church must therefore be done through local congregations. We can thus say that the local congregation becomes the working body of Christ. For this reason every member must exert his God-given responsibility through it. There should be no roving Christians — that is, Christians who have no responsibility in a local church.

This concept seems simple enough and is clearly taught in the New Testament, and amazingly enough nearly all theologians admit it correctly depicts the church in its ancient purity, but were we to ask our religious neighbors (who have a denominational concept of it), "What is the church?" they would likely reply, "A group of Christians who have voluntarily joined together to uphold the same faith, name, doctrine, and organization." In this view, they see themselves as Christians (and thus members of the Lord's church) before they joined together and formed what they call a church. They also understand that the association (church) formed is purely a human organization, something unknown in New Testament times. Furthermore, the faith, name, doctrine and organization are not the simple faith, name, doctrine and organization we read about in the Bible, but something conceived by councils and conventions of men, written in human creeds, and bound upon those who join the association. This is man's concept of the church and it differs widely with God's, as revealed in His holy word.

Why have men formed their own churches? Why is it seemingly so hard for them to accept the church as it is revealed in the Bible? Is it because they love the human more than the divine? Is it because they follow men rather than Christ?

BE STILL AND WAIT

On these pages, and in everything we have written or spoken, we have exhorted Christians to be urgent in their quest to win the world for Christ, to get involved, and stay involved until the Lord calls us away. This lack of urgency, this lack of involvement and work, has brought the growth of the church to a stalemate. Many Christians are taking too much time off from what should be a full-time employment. They are busy with the things of the world, but devote very little time to the things of God. But for those who have devoted their lives to taking the gospel message to the whole world, there is another side of the coin. They may, and often do, get so involved in the work that they forget God and neglect their own spiritual growth — they do not take the time to meditate or smell the flowers. They go at a mad rush until they are spiritually bankrupt. To prevent and correct this is the point of emphasis here.

The Bible says, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." (Ps. 46:10.) Again, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." (Ps. 27:14.) In the midst of so much urging to greater service for the Lord, it may seem strange to come across the words "be still" and "wait." But to be sure, they are there and they are the words of God. They thus merit our serious consideration, especially if we have become so busy working for the Master that we have no time for devotion or spiritual growth.

The urgency of our task (the carrying out of the Great Commission), the call and clammer of the world to keep pace, the pressure of earning a livelihood, the constant search for recreation and entertainment, the urge to fill life to the fullest, all combine to make life a rat race — rush, rush, rush from one thing to another. And one would be foolish to deny that our task of preaching the gospel to the lost is life's most urgent undertaking — so urgent in fact that the salvation of billions depend upon it. Nor will anyone seriously question the need of keeping pace with the times, such as learning to operate new gadgets, to keep up with the trade pace, to live in a modern society, etc. The pressure to earn a livelihood is real — it is no easy task to earn the kind of living we have come to expect and demand (to keep up with our neighbors who are trying to keep up with us). The pressure has driven nearly everyone, both men and women, into the job market, and many have even taken on a second job. There is no doubt either that we must take time for some pleasures (recreation). The body is not a perpetual machine that can keep going at the same pace forever. Life is short and as a consequence, every moment must be filled to its fullest — filled with the best life can afford. And while none of this is wrong **per se** (in fact, most of it is right and necessary), we must still take some time to be alone with God. That is, we must stop our mad pace to obtain things and wait on the Lord — take time to have communion with Him.

When we were growing up on the farm back in the mountains of East Tennessee, Dad often told us, "You never lose time in sharpening your tools." There is great wisdom in that. Could we not also say that we never lose time by waiting on God, by showing our devotion to Him, by meditating on His word, by realizing that without Him we could do nothing, by sharpening our spiritual sword. We sing, "Take time to be holy." But do we do it? Some author, unknown to us, says it better than we can:

Slow me down, Lord!
Ease the pounding of my heart
By the quieting of my mind.
Steady my harried pace
With a vision of the eternal reach of time.
Give me,
Amidst the confusion of my day,
The calmness of the everlasting hills.
Break the tensions of my nerves
With the soothing music of the singing streams
That live in my memory.
Help me to know
The magical restoring power of sleep.
Teach me the art
Of taking minute vacations of slowing down
to look at a flower;
to chat with an old friend or make a new one;
to watch a spider build a web;
to smile at a child;
or to read a few lines from a good book.
Remind me each day
That the race is not always to the swift;
That there is more to life than increasing its speed.
Let me look upward
Into the branches of the towering oak
And know that it grew great and strong
Because it grew slowly and well.
Slow me down, Lord,
And inspire me to send my roots deep
Into the soil of life's enduring values
That I may grow toward the stars
Of my greatest destiny.

Amen!

GOING TO HEAVEN

Heaven, as we have said so often that it has probably become trite, is a prepared place for a prepared people (see John 14:1-6). But still it is a truth we should have embedded in our whole being. One simply does not go to heaven by accident; he must purpose to go. And to go on purpose is to decide to go at all cost. It is to make heaven our aim and then let nothing turn us to the left or to the right until we have safely reached its golden shores.

Andrew Jackson, seventh president of the United States, was a determined man — he usually did what he decided to do. After he was dead, someone asked an old servant of his, "Do you think General Jackson went to heaven?" "I don't know," the servant replied, "but if he made up his mind to go, he went." Based on what we know about the character of Jackson, we excuse ourselves from making the decision as to where his soul will spend eternity (we are glad to leave such matters in the hands of God, where they belong) but one thing we do know, if a man goes to heaven, he must make up his mind to do so. And once that determination is fixed, one's whole life, whether it be long or short, lived in wealth or poverty, must be spent in preparation for that trip.

But regardless of how determined one may be to go to heaven, he cannot go except by God's way, which is the way of obedient faith — faith in Christ as God's Son and submission to Him as our Lord. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." (John 10:1.) So it is vital to every soul that he learn God's way (as it is revealed in the holy Scriptures) and make a total commitment to follow it. Heaven awaits those who do. All others are headed toward the infernal regions.

Have you made up your mind to go to heaven?

Hope

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

Probably the chiefest of our blessings is hope; it is the parent of all effort and endeavor; it is necessary in every condition. The miseries of poverty, captivity, and sickness would almost be unendurable without this comfort. Hope does not always give what it promises; but its promises are more valuable than the gifts of fortune. It keeps the mind awake, gives serenity and good humor, makes pain easy, and labor pleasant. No matter how desperate our straits, it enables us to see the light beyond. One of the most helpful things of life is cheerfulness, the product of hope. Hope is one of the most natural promptings of the mind and heart. Life would be worthless without it. All hope to better conditions of life for themselves, for others, or both. It infuses strength and courage. It overcomes difficulties. It is the parent of good works. The star of hope leads ever onward.

"And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three." (1 Cor. 13:13.) The superficial thinker, or the man who looks at the things which are seen is likely to ask how one can maintain his optimism in a troubled world like the one in which we live. The apologist for Christian optimism is likely to reply to the effect that he has seen people with tremendous odds against them battle such formidable obstacles as sickness, sorrow, and despair, and to a great extent overcome them. That to him appears to be sufficient reason for thinking that an optimistic outlook on life is possible with the average man. But when the Christian optimist reflects upon this answer, he is made to realize that there is a deeper meaning beneath it. Why is any one optimistic? The answer to this question, as it relates to the Christian, is found in Paul's great affirmation — "But now abideth . . . hope." Hope is one of the basic elements of Christian character, and it is entirely proper to speak of it as the very heart of our salvation. Paul also says in Romans 8:24, "For in hope were we saved." He calls this hope "the anchor of the soul." (Heb. 6:19.) The lack of hope in one's life is not a natural weakness; it is, rather, the result of deep estrangement from Christ. It is utterly impossible for one to please God or be happy without hope. If there were no hope, there would be no optimism; for optimism proceeds upon the assumption that good will ultimately triumph over evil. Webster defines optimism as "an inclination to put the most favorable construction upon actions and happenings, minimize adverse aspects, conditions, and possibilities, or anticipate the best possible outcome; a cheerful and hopeful temperment."

Christian optimism is not a blind attitude. Christian optimism does not ignore nor belittle the disorder and evil which exist in the world. The Christian optimist is not blind to the realities which are found all around him. He concedes that things which are not as they should be, but, following the lead of Paul, he is willing to postpone sentence upon the facts until the time when an intelligent judgment will be possible. The Christian optimist, by his faith and consequent life, is continuously bearing witness to the power and peace of God which are his in both good times and evil. He is full of hope when situations seem hopeless; for it is then that he is compelled to draw upon the spiritual resources of the Christian faith. To sum up what has been said, Christian optimism is not wishful thinking or an effort to escape the reality of conditions as they are. It is, rather, the facing of unpleasant and evil situations with courage and hopefulness, because of the knowledge which belongs to the Christian through his faith in Jesus.

Some Basic Ingredients of Christian Optimism

(1) **Confidence in the faithfulness of God.** 1 Corinthians 10:13 reads, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 2 Thessalonians 3:3 states, "But the Lord is faithful, who will stablish you, and keep you from evil." Hebrews 10:23 says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)." 1 Peter 4:19 asserts, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

(2) **Knowledge of the person and example of Jesus.** When Christ left His Father's throne, He came into a wicked, brutish, and hostile world; and here among men He demonstrated the meaning of truth, nobility, love, and all other virtues. These virtues were the sum total of His character, and this irreproachable character was the authority which men recognized when He spoke. Evil men feared Him, and as a result they persecuted and crucified Him; but death could not hold Him. A knowledge of what Jesus did gives us great hope and a feeling of optimism. John 14:19 reads, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also."

(3) **The great resources available through prayer.** Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (1 John 5:14-15) John 15:7 states, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

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Clayton Pepper, Editor

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear;
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

(4) **Practical suggestions on prayer.** Pray immediately upon rising. Pray before every meal. Pray at set times. Pray at odd times. Pray with the family. Pray when you feel discouraged. Pray immediately before retiring. Pray when you are happy. Pray aloud. Pray on your knees when possible, or in a humble position. Pray silently. Pray simply and naturally. Pray fervently. Pray until prayer becomes a habit. Pray at least ten times a day. —By Batsell B. Baxter.

(5) **The inexorable law of sowing and reaping.** "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:7-8.) This is the reason that Christians should not be depressed, should not endeavor to retaliate; and should not seek vengeance when they are misrepresented and mistreated. God has promised to take care of all such things, and we may be sure that men will reap that which they sow. Romans 12:19 reads, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Christians can, therefore, concentrate upon the tasks before them, and look to the future with a full degree of optimism.

Christians can be optimistic that Jesus will be with them wherever they go or regardless of the problems, trials, difficulties, and obstacles that may confront them as they journey through this short period upon this earth. An unknown author has written: "There was a man who died, and he reviewed the footsteps he had taken in his life. He looked down and noticed that all over the mountains and difficult places that he had traveled there was one set of footprints; but over the plains and down the hills, there were two sets of footprints, as if someone had walked by his side. He turned to Christ and said, 'There is something I don't understand. Why is it that down the hills and over the smooth and easy places You have walked by my side; but, here over the tough and difficult places I have walked alone, for I see in those areas there is just one set of footprints.' Christ turned to the man and said, 'It is that while your life was easy I walked along your side; but here, where the walking was hard and the paths were difficult, was the time you needed Me most, and that is why I carried you.' "

* * *

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The Ruin Of Our Waste

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

The text is Matthew 25:30. How often do we sit with our tears and moan the words "If only . . ."? Yes, indeed, we hurt and grieve when we see the ruin of our waste. The person who wastes his or her life living in disobedience to God will have an eternity of torment to grieve over their waste.

The admonition of this powerful parable is to devote our lives to hard work and we will not have any waste. But not to the goals and pleasures of this world are we to be devoted. We are living profitable lives when we are responsible and productive in the Lord's kingdom (the subject of the parable).

Let us devote our lives to God and work hard. No one wants to grieve over their life.

The Authority Of The Original Apostles

Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

As Jesus Christ was about to ascend into heaven from whence He came, to rule over all creation at His Father's right hand, He commissioned the men whom He had chosen to carry on His work of ministry. He instructed them to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit who would then lead these men in their own particular leadership of the new body to be established, the promised church of Christ (Acts 1; Luke 24:45-53; Matt. 16:18-19; John 16). As ordained ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, they were to preach the gospel now fulfilled as history (of which gospel they were eyewitnesses), encourage those to be immersed into this body by the preaching, and commit to the believers that which the Spirit would instruct into their care and practice (Mark 16:15-20; Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:1-2).

They were obedient to this charge and the Holy Spirit came as promised (Acts 2:1-4). They then continued their work to the very end, preaching and writing what Christ's Spirit so desired the infant church to receive (1 Pet. 1:10-12; 1 Cor. 14:37). The Lord had told them they would be guided into **all** truth (John 16:13); Peter said all necessary things had been given (2 Pet. 1:2-4); and John said the truth would be with the church forever (2 John 1-3). Their mission was accomplished.

Confirming the gospel as eyewitnesses and miracle workers, the Bible pictures the apostles with authority no one else in the church possessed or could possess. Consider their awesome authority: they could strike men dead or blind (Acts 5:1-11; 13:9-12); they could impart miraculous power to others (Acts 8:18; 19:6; 2 Tim. 1:6); they evidenced greater miraculous power than anyone else (Acts 2:43; 4:33; 5:12-16; 19:11; 1 Cor. 14:18; 2 Cor. 12:12; Rom. 15:18-19). They judged Israel by their preaching and provided the foundation for Zion (Matt. 19:28; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; Rev. 21:14). The prophets helped reveal God's message; but in the church, God put the apostles first.

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One thing is mightier than even they and that is the word which they preached. Paul, an apostle of the highest order, said, "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8.)

John said, "We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (1 John 4:6.) Faithfulness to God is determined by loyalty to the message.

We serve ourselves well to realize that apostolic writing carried equal authority to apostolic preaching (2 Cor. 10:10-11). And the writings plainly declare a pattern of specific tradition which was not to change until the coming of Jesus Himself (1 Cor. 11:26; 2 Thess. 2:15). These apostolic traditions by virtue of delegation carry the weight of God Himself (Matt. 10:40). Therefore, to disregard the message of the apostles' writings (the New Testament) is to disregard Christ. One is liable to believe lies and be damned if the apostles of Christ are not heeded (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

Now, since apostolic power resides in the message they preached, and since that message with its confirmation is preserved intact through the holy Bible, where is the place for apostolic succession? Paul himself claimed to be "last of all" the apostles (1 Cor. 15:7-10).

Apostolic authority resides in the New Testament which the Holy Spirit had written through these men. To be faithful to the New Testament is to be loyal to the Lordship of Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father. There is no other way to be right religiously or to approach God almighty (John 13:20; 14:6).

Rather than long evolutionary development of church worship and organization, all the needs of the church were fulfilled within the lifetime of the apostles by their ministry. And that which was counted outside of their ministry was declared heresy (Col. 2:6-8). So it is today. Our desire cannot be to change the followers of Jesus Christ to suit present-day social facades, but it must be to go back to that perfect pattern of religion plainly declared and once for all delivered to the saints by the holy apostles of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever (Jude 3, 17).

Fighting Back!

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

All saints share in a common struggle, the fight to rid our lives of sin. The fight to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul." (1 Pet. 2:11.) But we are not without help in this struggle. The sword of the Spirit (the word of God) gives us several important principles for fighting back.

We Need to Understand Sin

1. Its deceitfulness (Heb. 3:12-13). We need to realize the **deceptive power** that sin has. It deceives us into thinking, as Eve, that something wrong is really right. It deceives us into thinking, as the Galatians, that it will not affect us (Gal. 6:7-8). Yet the testimony of human history rings out with a single voice: sin deceives! "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:12.)

2. Its artificial, unfulfilling nature (1 John 2:15-17). Sin is not the realm of life that God intended for man to walk in. Consequently, when a man lives in sin, as did the prodigal son, he lives a life away from the Father and away from fulfillment. He lives in a "pigpen" of wasted potential, drowning in the stench of his own lusts.

3. Its passing pleasures (Heb. 11:24-25). Make no mistake about it, sin offers pleasure! It tastes sweet in the mouth but bitter in the throat. In view of eternity, the Hebrew writer terms the pleasures available to Moses as "passing." Moses had the opportunity to live out his days upon the earth

in the lap of royal luxury but understood the truth Jesus would speak centuries later, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? . . ." (Matt. 16:26.) Let us see to it that no one comes short of the grace of God and that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal (Heb. 12:15-16). Do not sell out to sin. You will be undersold every time!

We Need to Understand Our Choices

1. We only have two (Josh. 24:15). Very simply, our choice is to serve God or Satan. We do not have the choice of whether we will serve or not, our only choice is in who we serve (Rom. 6:16-22).

2. The implications of our choice to follow Jesus (Luke 6:46). Too many times we let Satan beat us by a simple parliamentary maneuver. We get beat because we ask the wrong question. When temptation strikes we ask, "Should I do this?" That question is out of order! Why? Because we have already answered it!

In becoming a Christian and making Jesus our Lord (Rom. 10:9-10), we gave up the rule of our life to Him. We no longer have the right to ask what we want; the question is what He wants and He wants us free from sin (John 8:31-32). Remember, He is Lord of all (in your life) or He is not Lord at all. So when we are tempted to do things contrary to His will, the proper question to ask is, "Where is the way of escape?" (1 Cor. 10:13.)

3. The failure to follow our choice (James 1:13-15). It has been said that we all possess a crown and a cross. When we make the decision to follow Jesus we give Him our crown and take up our cross. Sin occurs when we meddle with this order and try to exchange our cross for Jesus' crown. We force Christ upon our cross just as surely as did those who literally crucified Him. We mock His Lordship just as surely as those who spat upon Him. The whole process is an ugly one that James breaks down into three parts: lust, sin, and death. If we are to conquer sin in our lives we must learn to say no to self and yes to Christ.

We Need to Learn About Overcoming

1. The possibility (1 Cor. 10:13). Overcoming is the keynote to Christianity. The seemingly defeated Jesus told His disciples, "I have overcome the world." (John 16:33.) The apostle John writes, "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world — our faith." (1 John 5:4.) We must believe in Christ the overcomer and then through our faith in Him we can overcome too. If we do not believe this, we will live in the wilderness and die without reaching the promised land.

2. The price (Heb. 5:8). No pain, no gain! It was true for Jesus and it is true for us. We cannot kid ourselves, if we want to overcome the sin in our lives, there is a price to pay, the price of suffering. The suffering that is involved in putting to death the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13) and of learning to submit our will to God's.

3. The procedure (Matt. 6:34). The One who lived His whole life without the stain of sin gave one of the secrets to His success when He said, "Do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." (Matt. 6:34.) He taught His disciples to pray for their daily bread and for daily deliverance from evil (Matt. 6:11-13). One day at a time! Let us live life as it is given to us, on a daily basis. Let us fight the temptations of today and let tomorrow take care of itself.

4. The promise (Rev. 2:10). Aren't you glad the risen Jesus told John to write "be faithful" rather than "be perfect"? Aren't you glad that He is mindful that we are "but dust"? (Ps. 103:14). And aren't you glad that God sent His Son to die for us so that we can be saved from our sin? And doesn't the crucifixion of Christ paint a horrible picture of sin and make you want to eliminate it totally from your life? Be faithful in this pursuit and the crown of life will be yours!

* * *

"What Are We Doing?"

Jeff Lovitt, Rock Hill, SC

"Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, 'What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.' But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.' Now this he did not say on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation." (John 11:47-51.)

There is an indispensable lesson brewing just beneath the surface of this text that is often missed. The inspired writer tells us that Caiaphas was prophesying of the sacrificial death of Christ, but he was unaware of the prophetical nature of his statement. What he was uttering conveyed a truth that was far from the original intent of what he meant to say. To Caiaphas, the situation at hand provided an opportunity to protect his own position and safeguard a nation too powerless to shake off the shackles of Rome. The exclamation of the other Jewish leaders (John 11:47-48) provided the setting for Caiaphas' response. Answering the charge that if all men come to believe in and follow Jesus, the Romans will step in and take away both their place (position as Jewish leaders) and their nation (their sphere of power and influence), Caiaphas essentially said that killing Jesus would save them from this supposed threat. If Jesus was out of the way, then the Romans would have no cause for thinking that this Jesus was organizing a following to revolt against Rome. This threat to the chief priests' power formed the basis for their trumped-up charges that finally led to Jesus' arrest and execution (Luke 23:2).

The concern these men, especially Caiaphas, had for not upsetting the Roman government is seen in a subtle reference in this text: "But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest **that year.** . . ." (John 11:49.) In the Law, the high priest was appointed for life and was replaced only after his death (this is the point of Heb. 7:23; cf. Num. 20:25-26), but the Romans made this an annual office (Luke 3:2; John 18:13, 24; Acts 4:6 — the reference in Acts to Annas as high priest **after** Caiaphas has been described as such indicates further the lifelong duration of this office).

When these factors in the text are considered, an immediate application for us to compare with our own lives starts taking shape. First of all, Caiaphas was speaking from a compromised position. He was little more than a puppet of Rome. May the Lord deliver us from being like Caiaphas — speaking the truth while compromising our position in the world! The position that he and his colleagues so frantically wished to defend (John 11:48) was a position granted by men, not God. Do we too concern ourselves with what others think above what God directs? (cf. Gal. 1:10). Do we seek our own throne, or bow before the throne of God? Caiaphas shows us what happens when position among men becomes our concern rather than position before God.

Secondly, Caiaphas spoke with a high regard for his own wisdom. This is seen in the statement in verse 49: ". . . You know nothing at all. . . ." Caiaphas was quick to point out the logical conclusion to the dilemma with which they were faced. Man's "wisdom" has always gotten him into trouble (Rom. 1:21-22). There is sometimes a certain pride that comes with sagacity that results in spiritual blindness. "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Cor. 1:20.)

Caiaphas also spoke from a disposition of convenience. He was concerned only with expediences (John 11:50) that would remove the agitation that disturbed the smooth flow of things. The only difference between Caiaphas and the rich fool of Jesus' parable in Luke 12:16-21 is that the rich fool had all his crops already in the barn. Caiaphas' frustration at not yet having Jesus neatly tucked away in no way changes the point at hand. Is there not something about this searching for expedients that is hauntingly familiar? Most people want a religion that does not cost in the currency of commitment or demand conviction (cf. Acts 24:25)! But there stands Jesus. The religion He offers excludes convenience. He is not an expedient that we can dispense with when our will conflicts with His. Do we not realize that far beyond all the rhetoric and rationalizations, He really will be there to judge our lives one day? It is then that He can no longer be cast aside but must be faced.

Lastly, Caiaphas spoke the absolute truth (John 11:50), yet was not prepared to live by it. This sophistry is much in vogue today. Just agreeing with what God says and defending the truth of His word are not enough! This writer was talking a few months ago with a young lady about her need to obey Christ. She had known for years what God has commanded and could even show others what they needed to do to obey the Gospel. But she had not done so herself. Praise be to God that she saw the fallacy of such reasoning and has since obeyed the gospel! But how many **in the church** know the truth, and have accepted baptism without accepting the life that God calls His disciples to live? Caiaphas stated a truth whose impact did not occur to him. Let us pray that we may realize the impact of our convictions!

Caiaphas' problem started when he **spoke.** Had he listened to Jesus, he could have heard God. The choice is the same today. We either speak or listen. But we cannot hear God when we do all the speaking.

Is it not a bit ironic that the opening line of this event begins with the question, "What are we doing?" The sad truth is that they left this question unanswered. It might be good that we ask ourselves the same question, "What are we doing?" then try to answer by examining ourselves that we are not found in a compromising position before God, that we do not have too high a regard for our own estimation of things, that we do not let ours be a religion of convenience and expediency, and that when we speak the truth, we will be prepared to live by it!

"Forgive Them"

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Christ's first prayer from the cross was for forgiveness for those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34). This familiar and touching petition contains important implications.

What they do reminds us of the **enormity** of sin. They were committing the capital crime of history (Acts 2:23; 3:13-15; Matt. 27:25). But all sin is of the same nature (1 John 3:4; 5:17). Like the people Jesus described in Matthew 23:30-31, we would like to think we would not be so guilty, but the same sins that crucified Christ (envy, hatred, disobedience, etc.), are with us today. To reject Christ is to crucify Him afresh (Heb. 6:6).

In the words, **they know not** we are reminded that they were **ignorant, but still guilty.** Their ignorance contributed to their crime, but it did not excuse it. The fact that Jews prayed for their forgiveness demonstrates that they were guilty. Though knowledge compounds guilt (Luke 12:47-48), ignorance does not lessen guilt (Lev. 5:17; Rom. 10:1-3; Acts 17:13). Some people choose to be ignorant to avoid responsibility but such is no excuse (Matt. 13:15).

Forgive them reminds them of their (and our) **greatest need.** Jesus' mission was to provide this (Luke 24:46-47; John 3:17). The greatest blessing is forgiveness (Rom.

4:7-8; Heb. 8:12) and the greatest curse is to lack it (Heb. 10:26-31; Rom. 2:8).

"**Father**" is the address of His prayer. Jesus knew that His Father heard His prayers (John 11:41-42). It is especially fitting that He prayed for His enemies since He teaches us to do likewise (Matt. 5:44). But this was a **prayer, not pardon.** There were times when Jesus gave forgiveness to sinners (Mark 2:5, 10; Luke 7:47-48). But such is not the case here. Why? Because all prayer must be according to God's will (1 John 5:14). His will is that none perish but come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). Jesus could not forgive these impenitent people. Instead He prayed for their forgiveness. Then in the course of history, fifty days later they were convinced of what they had done and asked what to do. They were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. Those who did this were forgiven and Jesus' prayer from the cross in their behalf was then and thereby answered (Acts 2:36-41).

Forty-First Carolina Lectures

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

The forty-first annual Carolina Lectures were held April 1-4 at Duncan, South Carolina.

Attendance was good at all sessions of the Monday through Thursday programs. The speakers were all from either North or South Carolina with the exception of two. The Duncan congregation did a splendid job in planning and providing an enjoyable and profitable event. Appreciation is due to those who lodged guests in their homes and to those who provided the noon meals at the church building.

The lectureship theme was godliness, with particular attention to the necessity of godliness in the various aspects of day-to-day life. A book of outlines and speeches from the series has been printed and is available from the Duncan church. Tapes of lectures are also available.

Winfred Clark of Athens, Alabama, spoke each evening on issues of special concern to Christians in modern times. He also conducted the Open Forum on Monday and Thursday. The other special guest speaker was Harold Bigham, an attorney and elder from Nashville, Tennessee. He provided two sessions on legal matters confronting the church as a result of recent suits filed against certain congregations.

The Duncan church was established in 1933. There are four elders and four deacons. Terry Wheeler is the local minister.

An especially pleasant and harmonious spirit seemed evident throughout the lectureship.

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The Bad News Is Not The Good News

T. Douglas Couch, Asheboro, NC

Gospel means good news. Many have obeyed Satan's "gospel." The hellish doctrine that salvation is through selfishness has caused many to become emeshed in bitterness, greed, or moral impurity. However every selfish act (called sin in Scripture) has within it a seed of punishment. God has built into our universe a system of retribution for every act of rebellion. While Satan's pulpits may proclaim, "Do what you want; it will make you feel good," Satan does not tell the final result of sin. Truth in advertising would force the prince of demons to confess the final results of rebellion:

One hundred new cases of AIDS are diagnosed every week with most victims being homosexuals.

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Fourteen children die daily in the U.S. from child abuse.

Four thousand pre-born infants are slaughtered every day in our country.

One hundred and twenty-three adults and 14 teens commit suicide every day in the U.S.

God did not arbitrarily define an action as "sinful" to deny us pleasure. His purpose was to help us avoid sin and enable us to be successful. Though His gospel requires denial of self and of worldly lusts (Matt. 16:24; Titus 2:12) eternal pleasure awaits God's saints. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Ps. 16:11.) Satan's purpose is to destroy the objects of God's love. Satan's "good news" is really the bad news.

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Financial Help Needed

Quillie Brooker, Jr., Orangeburg, SC

The members of the Garden City church of Christ, which was established September 30, 1984, have a great need for a permanent ocation. We are a small group but feel that we have a wonderful potential for growth. We are now in the process of soliciting financial help from our sister congregations. If you can make a one-time contribution toward the obtaining of a suitable building, it will be greatly appreciated. If you know an individual or congregation who might be willing to support this work, please contact: Quillie Brooker, Jr., Minister, 531-3496, P.O. Box 2004, Orangeburg, S.C. 29116.

(Editor's note: Quillie Brooker is a fine young preacher and the Garden City church has a tremendous opportunity before it; it has almost unlimited potential for growth. But it must have an adequate building in which to meet. If you have money you want to put to good use, we know of no place where it could yield more dividends for the Lord. Help these brethren.)

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Telephone Con-Men Fleece Churches

Las Vegas, Nevada — Investigators from the Central Telephone Company are trying to catch con-men that have defrauded hundreds of churches in 49 states. The nationwide scam was uncovered in a six-month-long investigation. Authorities state that most of the calls were placed from various motel rooms throughout Las Vegas.

In carrying out the con, the caller purports to be from the small island country of Grenada. He is seeking assistance for a Grenadian Christian stranded in the United States. The caller usually asks for an amount between $125 and $175 and requests that the money be wired to a U.S. town.

Many victims of the con report that the caller possesses extensive knowledge of brotherhood people and events and is also seemingly knowledgeable of the condition of the church in Grenada. Terry Brough, minister of the church of Christ in Raton, New Mexico, said of the con-men, "They were just incredibly smooth." Rick Rickland, an elder of the Cuba Avenue church in Alamagordo, New Mexico, described the caller as "an excellent conversationalist." He also said that the caller identified himself as J.J. Guthrie, a minister from Grenada. Brough further observed that, "These people have an intimate acquaintance with the church — possibly they are even former members."

Telephone officials say that at this time it is impossible to estimate exactly how many churches have been contacted and how much money is involved. Company officials have turned their information over to the FBI and are awaiting further developments.

Church Growth Survey Yields Good News

Abilene, Texas — A survey conducted early this year by the Church Growth Institute at Abilene Christian University revealed that in 1984 the churches of Christ in the United States experienced a decline of only 0.5%. According to Flavil Yeakley, who published the findings of the survey, this figure represents the first significant change in the growth/decline rate to be observed in survey research over the past twenty years.

There is both good and bad news to the latest survey. The bad news is that the growth of the church in the U.S. is still declining, but the good news is that the decline in 1984 was less than expected. Yeakley predicts that if the 1984 pattern becomes a trend for future years, the decline in membership should be over by the end of this year and growth should begin again in 1986. A growth rate of 7.2% is necessary for the church to double in membership every ten years.

A.S. Croom Dies February 16

Searcy, Arkansas — Adlai Stevenson Croom died on February 16, 1985, at Searcy, Arkansas. Brother Croom was the first president of what is now Harding University and was a well-known preacher and author. In 1922 he began serving as president of Arkansas Christian College. During his tenure the school became a senior college and the name was changed to Harding College upon his recommendation.

Brother Croom attended Freed-Hardeman College from 1912 to 1914 and was baptized during that time by L.L. Briggance. He also studied Greek and Hebrew at the Baptist Seminary under A.T. Robertson, who is recognized as perhaps the greatest Biblical language scholar the world has ever known. Croom completed his education with a Masters Degree in mathematics from Harvard University. In 1922 he married Margaret Harris. She followed brother Croom in death on March 21, 1985. Brother Croom was 92 years old when he died. Funeral services were conducted at the College church of Christ with Jimmy Allen and Alan Isom in charge of the service.

Collins Announces Retirement

Nashville, Tennessee — Willard Collins, president of David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tennessee, has announced his plans to retire from the presidency effective August 31, 1986. That date marks the conclusion of the fiscal year, at which time Collins will have reached the mandatory retirement age of 70. He has been president of Lipscomb since September 1, 1977.

Since Collins' announcement, two Nashville men have been named to head the search for a successor. W.B. Bennet and Miles Ezell, Jr., have been named chairman and secretary, respectively, of the search committee. Both are members of the Lipscomb Board of Directors.

Carolina Church News

NORTH CAROLINA

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Raleigh. The David Riggs family will be moving to Fairfax, Virginia, where David will serve as the pulpit minister.

Reidsville. The church has changed their Sunday morning meeting times to 10:00 for classes and 11:00 for worship. Plans are being made for the purchase of a 1½-acre building lot, at a cost of $25,000.

N.C. Conversions

Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 12; Helen St., Fayetteville, 1; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 2; Hendersonville, 1; Jericho, Mocksville, 4; Archdale, Charlotte, 1. Total: 21.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Seneca. Elders were appointed on March 24. They are Bill Cannon, Jim Phillips, and Bill Thompson. Oscar Craft, an elder from Duncan, presided over the appointment program, including delivering the morning sermon.

Greenville. Remodeling of the auditorium at Northeast in Taylors is underway to provide for additional seating.

West Columbia. Rudy Senn has been asked to move to West Columbia to assume the duties of the local preacher. Rudy is the oldest son of the R.W. Senns of Columbia and is a brother of Jerry Senn of Hendersonville, N.C.

S.C. Conversions

Cokesbury Rd., Greenwood, 1; Central, Spartanburg, 10; Essex Village, Charleston, 1; Myrtle Beach, 1; St. Andrews Rd., Columbia, 1; Lexington, 2; N. Charleston, 1. Total: 18.

Book Reviews

Johnny Melton, Statesville, NC

Commentary on Romans, Howard Winters; Carolina Christian Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 5423, Station B, Greenville, S.C. 29606; 192 pages, paper, $6.50.

Commentary on Romans by Howard Winters will make a valuable contribution to the literature discussing what many believe to be the greatest of all Pauline epistles. Underneath the title on the book's cover are the words, "Practical and Explanatory." Both words are aptly chosen. The book is not plagued by technical jargon that does little more than baffle the average reader; nor does it simply raise interesting questions about the text.

The comments are practical. They drive home the fact that Paul wrote to real people about a real problem describing a real solution provided by the real God. Romans is never discussed as though it is some abstract theological treatise. Brother Winters writes with the conviction that the unfolding of God's scheme of redemption goes to the very warp and woof of human existence. There is nothing more practical than salvation from sin.

The comments are explanatory. Difficult passages are not ignored. Brother Winters skillfully explains the Scriptures. His comments are analytical without losing their devotional quality.

It is obvious that the standard works on Romans have been read. It is even more obvious that Romans has been read. In order to write a meaningful commentary on a Bible book, one must have a thorough knowledge of that book. But more than that, in order to write a meaningful commentary on a single book of the Bible, one must know the whole Bible. One must be so familiar with all of God's revelation that one knows where and how a particular book "fits" in God's scheme of things. Howard Winters is well qualified, on both accounts, to write this commentary.

In the Preface brother Winters suggests, "The first thing that one will observe in the reading of these notes is that they are neither critical nor scholarly." By "critical" he means a technical discussion of the Greek text. While he does not bring textual criticism into the commentary, he has obviously wrestled with the relevant materials and is knowledgeable of critical problems. By "scholarly" he means that it is not written in technical jargon. While the commentary is written on a popular level, it is certainly not devoid of scholarship. It is the product of old-fashioned scholarship. The kind of scholarship where one has filled himself with his subject and writes from the "overflow."

Brief excerpts from the beginning and close of the commentary illustrate brother Winters' skillful exposition. On the phrase "is the power of God unto the gospel, God's power to save from sin! God's power inheres in the system, the system by which God can be just and still justify the sinner (3:26). Just as God has put His power into a seed to reproduce after its kind (Gen. 1:11-12), He has put His power to save in the gospel (Luke 8:11, 1 Cor. 4:14; Jas. 1:18, 1 Pet. 1:23). It is God's power to root out the love of sin, the power of sin, the practice of sin, the guilt of sin, and the penalty of sin. It is not God's power to save politically, socially, financially, physically, or mentally, even though all these are strongly influenced by it, but God's power to save from sin. By obedience to the gospel one dies to sin, is buried with the Lord in baptism, and arises a new creature in Christ (6:1-7; 2 Cor. 5:17). Thus before one can be saved by the gospel, he must follow its instructions. The gospel has no power to save those who will not accept it and the remedy it offers. The gospel is, therefore, God's: (1) convincing power (10:17; John 20:30-31; Acts 18:8); (2) convicting power (Acts 2:37; Heb. 4:12); (3) converting power (Ps. 19:7; Jas. 5:19-20); (4) enlightening power (Ps. 119:130; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38; 2 Pet. 1:5-8); (5) restraining power (Gal. 6:7-8; Rev. 21:8); (6) constraining power (2:4; 2 Cor. 2:14); (7) cleansing power (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:26; 1 Pet. 1:22); and (8) exalting power (1 Thess. 4:16-18)."

And then commenting on the phrase "with an holy kiss" in Romans 16:16, he writes, "See also 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26. For nearly all the oriental people at that time, and even today, the kiss was the customary form of greeting. Thus Paul's design was not to reveal, command, or bind the custom, but to regulate the manner of its practice. It was to be, not just a kiss, but a holy kiss. In the Scriptures we can see the following types of kisses: (1) the idolatrous kiss (Hos. 13:2); (2) the deceitful kiss (Prv. 27:6); (3) the betrayal kiss (Luke 22:48; Matt. 26:48; Mark 14:44); (4) the passionate kiss (Sol. 1:2); (5) the penitent kiss (Luke 7:45); (6) the parental kiss (Luke 15:20); (7) the sorrowful kiss (Acts 20:37); (8) the affectionate kiss (1 Pet. 5:14). The first three of these could be called unholy kisses; the fourth could be either holy or unholy —depending on whether it is within marriage or not); the last four are holy. Greetings among Christians ought to be of the latter, not the former, sort. That is, a salutation should be an act of love unfeigned. This principle is as true now as it was then. That is to say that all greetings should be pure and holy, whether expressed by kiss, curtsy, or handshake."

Read Romans. Read **Commentary on Romans** by Howard Winters. You will appreciate more the glorious grace of God that has been revealed in the gospel.

BACKFIRE

Letters to the Editor

Dear Brother Winters:

I am new to the Carolinas. I began working as the evangelist with the Plaza church in Sumter in February. I have read a few issues of **Carolina Christian** and have enjoyed them, particularly the emphasis given to preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. A fragmented and shell-shocked brotherhood will never be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil, much less take the gospel to a lost and dying world. — Bruce Green, Sumter, S.C.

When the devil saw that he could not get all of us back into the world by corrupting our lives with immorality and dishonesty, he introduced a new weapon (at least new to the Carolinas), namely, the spirit of distrust, disharmony, and disfellowship. And wherever this spirit invaded the church, it stopped it cold in its tracts. But the sad part of this is the more "sound" we consider ourselves the more likely we are to fall into this trap of Satan. We permit him to use our "soundness" to create distrust, disharmony, and disfellowship. This ought not to be so. An army fighting against itself cannot win over the enemy.

Dear Brother Winters:

We enjoy **Carolina Christian.** We like both its contents and its size — easy to handle, carry, and read. — The Merton Luscombes, Battle Creek, MI.

Dear Brother Winters:

I must say that I had to cry just a little bit when I read your preface to **Commentary on Romans,** and felt with you when you told of your great discovery of **B.W. Johnson's New Testament With Notes.** My B.W. Johnson's was **Why We Believe the Bible** by George W.'DeHoff. He opened for me a whole new world on Christian evidences and apologetics. In so many ways I could respond to what you wrote, but the thing that means most to me is the fact that I know you, and in my judgment you are one of our truly great men in the pulpit today. I do not believe that anyone has ever had a greater influence for good upon my life than have you and brother Clayton (the editor's brother in the flesh, HW). And I am hoping that your commentary on Romans will have a wide circulation. A few days ago I read from your preface to my

English literature class as we were studying a poem from Keats. I also told my class of the influence brother DeHoff's **Why We Believe the Bible** had upon me. — R.C. Oliver, Parkersburg, WV.

Brother Oliver is a retired English and Bible teacher from Freed-Hardeman College and is now preaching in Parkersburg, WV, and teaching in Ohio Valley Christian College. He has long been a dear friend and a staunch supporter. He is one of a number of men in our lives who have made an immeasurable contribution to our Christian growth — we are what we are because of them. While his overly generous words thrill us (the help has come to us from him rather than the other way around), we quote them here so as to pass on to you the experience he had when he first read brother DeHoff's book. It had a similar effect on us. We read it at or about the same time we read *All About the Bible* by Sidney Collett and cannot separate the effects of one from the other. But for the first time in our lives we saw the vast amount of evidence that could be brought together to prove that the Bible is the eternal word of God. How great is the loss of those who have never had such an experience with a book!

Dear Brother Winters:

Seeing your comments about **Johnson's Notes** (in the preface to **Commentary on Romans**) causes me to say a big "**amen.**" I ran on this set (then in two volumes) when I had just began to preach. I have treasured it ever since and for years took it to Bible class with me. You have heard the old story that when Paul asked for "the parchments" he had in mind **Johnson's Notes**! They have been such a blessing to so many. — George W. DeHoff, Murfreesboro, TN.

George W. DeHoff is one of our five favorite authors. We read everything we can find from his pen. His monumental six-volume set of commentaries on the whole Bible should find its way into every Christian home. Like *Johnson's Notes,* it will bless thousands, yea, millions!

Dear Howard:

I deeply appreciate your excellent editorials in **Carolina Christian.** I have been receiving the paper for 15 years and I enjoy it more with each issue. Your editorials in January (1985) were outstanding and most especially the ones on "Worry and Depression" and "A Service of Love." Your editorial "1985 — A Crucial Year," should make each of us pause, consider, and resolve to take personal action to assure continuation of the paper. . . . Let us pause and analyze: at the present about 3,000 issues are distributed monthly. If the 3,000 who receive it would plan a minimum (and many of us could give more) gift of $5 per month, the work would have assurance of some $150,000 a year to publish and expand the effort of the paper. Mrs. Fuhry and I plan to give a minimum of $30 per month throughout the remainder of 1985. — Henry L. Fuhry, Swannanoa, NC.

What an exciting possibility! No one is doing more to promote and build *Carolina Christian* than brother Fuhry. In addition to his good writings and generous contributions, he has sent in scores of subscriptions and orders. May his tribe increase.

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TURN IT AROUND

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

"Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country!" This challenge, made famous during the Kennedy presidency, suggests a like principle which should guide every Christian's attitude toward the church. We should be less concerned about what is being done for us and more attentive to what we are doing for others.

Ask not, therefore . . .

. . . whether this is a good congregation to be a member of, but ask whether I am a good member of the congregation.

. . . how much I am loved, but how much love have I shown.

. . . how many get well cards I received, but how many I have sent to others.

. . . who visited me, but who have I visited.

. . . how much I get out of classes, but how much I contribute to make the classes interesting and edifying.

. . . whether I was remembered in prayer, but whether I faithfully prayed for others.

. . . who did or did not speak to me, but how many others I greeted.

. . . whether my good work is recognized, but whether I have given honor to whom honor is due.

. . . how many of my prayer requests God has granted, but how grateful have I been for His innumerable blessings.

. . . to what extent my deeds have profited me now, but how my life will be remembered when I am gone.

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." (Phil. 2:4-5; Matt. 20:28.)

editorial

A NEW PAPER

A new paper has made its debut in the Carolinas. It is called **Restoration Report,** and is published at Mocksville, NC, under the joint editorship of Bill Ijames, a practicing attorney and member of the historic Jericho church in Mocksville, and Charlie Harrison, preacher for the Corinth church in Woodleaf, NC, both of whom are known to many of our readers. Its objective is to emphasize the restoration movement and everything that pertains to it. Or in its own words: "To fit a need to (a) support every worthwhile endeavor that comes to our attention, (b) to foster evangelism throughout the world, (c) to teach on Christian living, and (d) to present the cause of Christ in a loving, positive manner." The first issue focuses on the church in North Carolina, featuring Abilene in Statesville, Agape of NC, M.C. Kurfees as a NC evangelist, spotlighting NC, news briefs, Book Mart, and a very valuable directory of churches in NC. For those who wish to keep informed about what is going on in churches of Christ, this paper will prove to be both profitable and interesting. It is a 12-page monthly and the subscription price is $5.00 per year. The address: **Restoration Report,** PO Box 884, Mocksville, NC 27028. We recomment it without reservation. (The next issue is to focus on SC. No one in the Carolinas will want to miss either the first or second issues.)

THAT HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE

In recent months (since the Joplin Unity Forum) we have been hearing a great deal about hermeneutical principles, especially in regards to how to interpret the silence of the Scriptures. While it may sound new and strange to many of us, it is a perfectly good expression (that is, unless it is used as a euphemism to cover and thus soften or ignore the difference in approach to the study of the silence of Scripture as it relates to our service to God), but it seems to us as if some are using it to imply that a hermeneutical principle is only a matter of judgment, something not to be bound on another who may wish to follow a different interpretative approach. If this is the case, then it is treading on dangerous grounds. Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation and a hermeneutical principle is the method or approach used to interpret the Scriptures (as to our concerns now, the attitude or method by which one deals with the silence of Scripture or the use of things unauthorized, such as instrumental music in Christian worship). And while the expression may be new to most of us, the principle (and the problem to which it relates) is not. The principle is as old as the Bible itself.

But the one question with which we are to deal here is, Does the Bible itself teach a hermeneutical principle pertaining to its silence (that is, pertaining to our use or non-use of unauthorized things in service to God)? Or to word it differently, Is the hermeneutical principle by which one ap-

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EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

Howard Winters, Editor; David Pharr, Carolina News Editor; Dennis Conner, Brotherhood News Editor, Johnny Melton, Carolina Pulpit Editor.

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proaches the silence of the Scriptures only a matter of opinion or is it a matter of faith — is man left to device his own hermeneutics or does the Bible itself teach the proper approach? Our conviction is strong here: we believe the Scriptures clearly and unequivocally teach the hermeneutical principle that we are to follow in our study of truth divine. If this is the case, then it is not a matter of opinion, and man is not left free to follow any approach he may choose. Rather the God of heaven binds upon us the principle by which we are to study and apply His holy word.

As it relates to the silence of the Scriptures, and the acts of service we are to render to God, we can think only of two hermeneutical principles, one of which must be followed and the other rejected (we cannot follow a skip from the one to the other principle): (1) The Scriptures permit everything not condemned specifically by word or principle; (2) The Scriptures condemn everything not authorized specifically by word or principle. If the first approach is true, then Scriptures authorize **everything** not specifically condemned. This would mean that anything or everything could be used in the service of God just so long as it is not prohibited in revealed truth. All the innovations (from instrumental music in worship to kissing the Pope's big toe) since the apostolic age are therefore acceptable. If this is the proper hermeneutical approach, when the Scriptures are silent everyone is left to decide his own actions in the worship and service of God. His own opinions and conclusions are the authority by which he acts — every man does that which is right in his own eyes. If, however, the second principle is the correct (and Scriptural) one (and we believe it is), then we are to do nothing in service to God but that which the Bible reveals — that which He has told us to do in His word. In other words, we follow the instruction of the Bible by doing only what it authorizes or reveals. In this view, every act is an act of obedience to God, an act of obedience because He has commanded it or in some other way revealed it as His will for us to do. Nothing is done that is not taught or authorized. In short, God has told us what He wants done (cf. 2 Tim. 3:17; 2 Pet. 1:3-4). Thus where there is no word from God there is no acceptable act to God. God has revealed His will to us in His word; silence, therefore, means no revelation on the matter. And when there is no revelation there can be no obedience (except to remain silent because God is silent).

But which, if either, of these hermeneutical principles is taught in the Scriptures? There are scores of passages which bear upon this matter but we will produce only two, the first briefly and the second in a little more detail.

1. To please God we must strive lawfully. To illustrate this principle, Paul said, "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." (2 Tim. 2:5.) The NIV rendering might help us see the point better: "Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules." It should be obvious to everyone that Paul is not giving a lesson for athletes alone. He is simply using this as an illustration of how we can be acceptable to God in our service to Him. We must live lawfully — that is, we must follow the rules. No athletic game permits its players to make their own rules as they go. Every game has its rules and all players must play by them — by what the rules say and not by what they do not say. It would be ridiculous for players to argue that you can do anything in a game that the rules do not prohibit (actually the rules themselves prohibit everything not in the rules). But if we are to know and follow the will of God, does this not necessarily imply that we do only what the law or rules authorize? Indeed, it does.

2. All things are to be proven good before they are practiced. Paul specifically instructs, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. 5:21.) If we are not absolutely mistaken in our exegesis of this verse, it teaches, clearly and unequivocally, the hermeneutical principle we must follow in our study and application of the Scriptures. Four things are taught or necessarily implied by the verse: (1) we are commanded to prove all things; (2) all acceptable (or good) things can be proven; (3)

all proven things are to be accepted and practiced; (4) all things not proven are to be rejected. Let us look at each of these further:

(1) We are commanded to prove all things. This command is as binding on us as baptism, the Lord's supper, keeping ourselves pure, or any other thing that is specifically taught. We have no choice in the matter, if we are to please God: before we accept or practice a thing it must first be proven. Note in particular that we are to prove that which is good or right. This is what is demanded by the second hermeneutical principle stated above. It is not a command to prove something wrong before it is rejected, the approach of the first hermeneutical principle above stated. This clear Bible command obligates us to prove that which is good (before it is practiced), not prove that it is wrong (if it has not been proven right it is wrong, and if it is wrong it should never have been practiced to start with). A thing that cannot be proven good (by the Scriptures) is thereby proven wrong when used in the service of God. Thus the principle we are to follow is to prove a thing before we practice it, and a practice cannot be proven unless the Bible teaches or approves it in one way or another. If this does not mean that we are to study the Bible to see what it says, in view of doing that and nothing more, rather than to study the Bible to see what unrevealed things it does not condemn (if our exegesis is correct, it condemns everything it does not reveal as far as the service of God is concerned), it is absolutely meaningless. We believe this alone establishes the hermeneutical principle we are to follow in the study of the silence of the Scriptures. But let us go further:

(2) All acceptable things can be proven. If they could not be proven, then Paul would not have charged us to prove all things. But he has more to say on the subject: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12:2.) Again, "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." (Eph. 5:10.) But in addition to charging us to prove all things, the Scriptures claim to furnish the man of God unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:17). And then putting this concept beyond question, Peter says, "According as his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. . . ." (2 Pet. 1:3-4.) Now it should be obvious that if the Scriptures furnish us with every good work and reveal all things that pertain to life and godliness that our aim in studying and applying them should be to find out what is good and what pertains to godliness. That which they do not reveal is not a good work, neither does it pertain to life and godliness. This proves, if anything can be proven, that all good things are taught or authorized in the Scriptures. Our aim then should be to find out what is taught with a view of doing that, and nothing more.

(3) All things proven good or acceptable may be practiced. "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." This is simply to say that if a thing is taught in the Scriptures, we are to accept it. We have no choice in the matter if we are to please God. No one has the right to reject that which is proven. If one can reject one thing, then another may reject another, and another another, until the whole Bible is rejected. We cannot reject a part and still accept it as a whole. Thus if we reject one thing that is proven, we have no reason to accept anything that is proven. There is therefore only one correct conclusion to reach, namely, all proven things are to be accepted. On the other hand, if we accept one thing which cannot be proven (on the basis that it is not specifically condemned), we have no reason to reject anything, regardless of what it may be, that is not specifically condemned. So if we are not horribly blinded to the truth, the hermeneutical principle (or approach) we are to take in studying the Scriptures (especially pertaining to their silence) is crystal clear — we hold fast (or practice)

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Clayton Pepper, Editor

only that which is proven acceptable. Thus all things proven acceptable may be practiced. Nothing else is permissible.

(4) All things not proven (by the Scriptures, as an acceptable service to God) are to be rejected. If we accept and practice only that which is proven, it is inevitable that we reject everything that cannot be proven. All acceptable things can be proven right (that is, the Bible teaches or authorizes them). That which is proven right (or good) is what may be done. But if we do only that which is proven right, we must reject (or refuse to do) all unproven things (all things upon which the Scriptures are silent). Or to say it another way, the Bible itself teaches that if a thing is not taught or authorized by divine authority it cannot be done in the worship or service of God. If this has any meaning at all (and it does), it means that the silence of the Scriptures do not authorize — that only taught or authorized things can be done.

From all of this there is only one conclusion to reach, namely, the Scriptures themselves bind on us the hermeneutical principle of proving all things that are practiced in the worship or service of God. That is to say, a thing must be proven (by the Scriptures) before it is practiced. This approach is divinely taught. Those who choose to follow some other hermeneutical principle (e.g., the Scriptures authorize everything they do not condemn specifically) are following the cunning craftiness of human wisdom — they are doing what seems right in their own eyes rather than doing right as God reveals the right. Such a course is too dangerous for those who are sincerely seeking the way to heaven.

THE SECOND COMING

There is a vast amount of speculation these days about the second coming of our blessed Lord, and most of it is just downright false teaching. Religious leaders, with a craving for recognition as "prophetic preachers," have for centuries twisted the Scriptures in an effort to make them teach that we are right now living toward the end of the final generation of people to inhabit the earth. They are always saying that the current year is a prophetic year and that the coming of Christ must of necessity occur very soon, maybe in this very year and by all odds before the end of the decade. The date setting business is very brisk. Out of such speculation has come scores of erroneous theories concerning both the time and purpose of the second coming of Christ. Since the Bible clearly teaches that no one, not even the modern prophetic (which could more accurately be called pathetic) preachers, know or can know (Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32). The time of Christ's coming is simply not revealed, and unrevealed things belong only to God (Deut. 29:29). What God has not revealed is simply not hidden away somewhere between the lines waiting for some preacher to come along and uncover it. Thus to speculate on the time of the second coming is an exercise in futility. But in this short item, we wish to deal only with the purpose of His coming.

An inspired writer wrote, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:27-28). To see more sharply the point of these two verses it is necessary to back up and see the comparison drawn from the previous verses. Under the Old Testament system the high priest went once a year to offer a blood sacrifice for the sins of himself and the people (1-8). This was a figure of Christ, the great high priest who offered Himself to purge our sins (9-14). In doing so, He established a new covenant, sealed with His own blood, to provide the remission of sins (15-22). His offering, unlike that of the Old Testament priests, was offered once for all — an offering never to be repeated (23-26).

It is against this background that the Hebrew writer tells us that Christ died, sacrificed Himself, once for sins. He does not repeat the sacrifice over and over again, as under the Old Testament system (v. 26), but once for all He offered Himself to bear the guilt of man's sins. Thus the purpose of His first coming was to take away sins by the sacrifice of Himself. He died to pay man's sin penalty. This was His mission, the reason why He came into the world. When man is forgiven of his sins, he becomes a citizen of the kingdom Christ came to establish (John 3:5; 18:36). Or to say it another way, he is added to the church and the church is the spiritual kingdom of Christ. Thus the primary purpose of Christ's first coming was to save souls and the souls He saved became the citizens of His kingdom.

But why is He coming a second time? Perhaps it would help to see some of the reasons why He is not coming. He is not coming to set up an earthly kingdom. This is a dream of materially minded men who think that the physical is a superior blessing to the spiritual. Second, He is not coming to correct what He failed to do at His first coming. He accomplished His purpose the first time and He will do the same the second. But if He failed before, what assurance do we have that He will succeed the next time? Third, He is not coming to offer men a second chance. The gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). Those who reject the gospel have no hope, now or ever. Fourth, He is not coming to make earth into a heaven. He is gone away to prepare a place for us (John 14:1-6). Thus the Bible teaches that He is now preparing a place, not that He will come and prepare the earth for His reign. Fifth, He is not coming to offer another sacrifice for sins. That He did at His first coming, once for all.

Why then is He coming? He is coming the second time without sin unto salvation. That is to say He is coming to consummate (or complete) the salvation of those for whom He died. This can mean only that the purpose of His second coming is to receive unto Himself, unto the place He has prepared for them, those who have received the benefits of His death (cf. Eph. 5:26-27). That is, He is coming to reward eternal life to those who have received the forgiveness of sins by His shed blood. This being the case, the second coming will bring to a close the present order of things and the saved will be ushered into that eternal state for which they are living and waiting.

So whether one speaks of the first or second coming of Christ, he must speak of one thing, namely, the salvation of souls. The first coming was to make the sacrifice for sins; the second, to give eternal rewards to those who have been washed in the blood. To look for Him to come and set aside the spiritual and restore the physical, to abandon the gospel and return to the law, to leave the substance and go back to the shadow, is a fool's dream. Do not be carried away with it.

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In Pursuit of Peace

Rick Parks, Lexington, SC

There is good reason for concern over the arrogant and small-minded attitude that fosters intolerance of a difference of opinion on any point. That division occurs among brethren over matters of opinion can hardly be denied. That such division is the result of opinions being exalted as doctrine and made tests of fellowship is equally true. Paul addressed this problem with great simplicity in Romans 14, but the counsel of the Holy Spirit seems to have fallen on deaf ears in our day. Conspicously absent among many Christians is the desire to "pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding" (Rom. 14:19, RSV). Clearly, the apostle Paul did not equate the pursuit of peace with doctrinal laxity. The idea that an eagerness to pursue peace among believers is a trademark of those willing to compromise the truth is a false notion.

In the Roman province of Galatia, a system of Jewish legalism began to make headway during apostolic times. The churches of Galatia quickly deserted Christ and His gospel because some Jewish Christians exalted their opinions and insisted they were doctrine. In Galatians 5:12 Paul exposes the fact that these Christians were "unsettled" over the issue of circumcision. In verse 13 he admonishes the Christians in Galatia to "be servants of one another" through love. What a contrast to verse 15! Paul warns, "But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another."

As the body of Christ we have failed to show the world the convincing proof that we are the disciples of Christ. "By this," said Jesus, "will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Too often, we have shown the world a shattered body, fragmented and divided over every imaginable opinion and disputable question. While the world runs a rapid pace toward the gates of hell, we are preoccupied with "biting and devouring" those who disagree with us and licking our wounds when they bite back. It is more than sad, it is sinful!

The time has come to stop promoting "controversies rather than God's work" and to turn away from "meaningless talk" (1 Tim. 1:4b, 6b). It is also time to put Christ back in our preaching, admonishing and edifying the church to glorify His holy name. In our pursuit of peace, we must not commit ourselves to any man (Gal. 1:10), but wholly devote our lives to the Prince of Peace.

Christians Only, but Not the Only Christians

Ralph J. Jones, Lexington, SC

This slogan has been around a long time. I do not know where or when it originated, but I first heard it about fifty years ago. For preachers in the Lord's church to declare that we are Christians only but not the only Christians without adequate clarification is to suggest that denominational preachers also preach a pure gospel and that their converts are Christians too. Is it not deceitful to offer false hope to those who have not obeyed the gospel or have submitted to part of the gospel? Is it not misleading to suggest that God has children outside His family? Surely the misinformed convert will eventually be taught the truth and will know that they must repent and obey the gospel.

No student of the Bible would deny that one who hears the gospel and believes it and repents of his sins and obeys the Lord in baptism is added by the Lord to His church. Baptism puts one into Christ and His church. If the new Christian unwittingly is involved in a church group that worships and teaches doctrine contrary to the New Testament, that new Christian is in error. If such a one is honest, when he learns the will of God more perfectly, he will repent and change immediately. There are some few such individuals worshipping in error but the denominational world is not overly populated with them.

To suggest that we all (those in the church and those in denominations) are in need of further study to restore New Testament Christianity and there is gross error in the Lord's church is to deny that the church is restored in name, organization, worship and plea. Grant there always has been and always will be problems with the imperfect humans who make up the church, but the New Testament plan for the church is perfect.

There is no excuse for arrogance and spiteful condemnation of those worshipping in error. The Lord demands patient, considerate and loving concern for the erring. We must show them our love by holding forth the truth and let our words and our actions exemplify the truth. We must convince all that the way of the Lord is perfect and that there is no disappointment in Him.

Kenneth Robert Ferneyhough

Richard T. McWilliams

Kenneth Robert Ferneyhough, 20, nephew and foster son of David Ferneyhough, minister of the Church of Christ in Georgetown, died May 14, 1985, at a Charleston Hospital. Kenneth was reared from age eight by David and his recently deceased wife, Shirley, after the death of his parents. He was a member of the church for about half of his life. He taught classes, preached, and served the church in many other ways. He was also a student at Coastal Carolina College and did substitute teaching in public schools where he was well-liked and respected. He was also in the S.C. Army National Guard.

The funeral was at the Georgetown Church building on May 15 and burial was at the Penny Royal Memorial Gardens.

Surviving are his foster father, David; a brother, Wallace; two sisters, Vivian and Delfeney; a foster brother, Jeffrey; a foster sister, Teresa; and his grandmother, Alice Futch.

A special expression of sympathy is also extended to David and his family in the loss of his mother in April.

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Virginia Lectures

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

The Second Annual Virginia Lectures were held May 23-25 at Christiansburg, Virginia. People attended from all over Virginia and from at least seven other states. We would estimate that over 500 were present for some of the evening sessions.

Some of the speakers were Tom Warren, Garland Elkins, Robert Taylor and Johnny Ramsey. A. Lowell Altizer, "dean of Virginia preachers," presented an excellent lesson on "Cast Not Away Your Confidence." All the messages were taped and are available from the Christiansburg church (P.O. Box 306, 24073).

The congregation in Christiansburg has an excellent facility, large enough to handle the lectureship crowds. Their hospitality was outstanding. The church is served by four elders and Clarence Lavender is the preacher.

A few from the Carolinas attended this year's program. We congratulate our neighbors to the north for their sound and progressive work.

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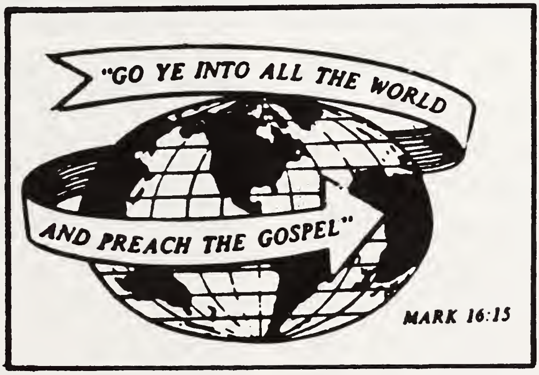

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The Eldership

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

(Editor's Note: The following material was sent in to be run in a series of three articles, but it is of such nature that we think it should all appear in one issue. Part 1 concerns itself with the elders, part 2 with their qualifications and responsibilities, and part 3 with their selection and appointment. Churches would do well to purchase extra copies of this issue for distribution and class study. — HW)

PART 1

The Elders (1 Pet. 5:1-4)

When we read the New Testament, we soon learn that the elders in the Lord's church are the men who have the oversight of the congregations of the Lord's people (Acts 14:23; 1 Thess. 5:12). The New Testament not only teaches that the elders have the oversight; it also shows that these men are referred to under several different titles. The men who are called "elders" in Acts 20:17 are referred to as "overseers" in Acts 20:28. In 1 Tim. 3:1-2, Ti. 1:7, and 1 Pet. 2:25 they are called "bishops." In 1 Tim. 4:14 the term "presbytery" is used to denote the "elders." The singular of presbytery would of course be "presbyter." The term "pastor" is found in Eph. 4:11. The term "pastor," of course has the same meaning as the word "shepherd." All six of these terms may be used interchangeably as they are in the New Testament, without doing violence to any of the terms.

The word elder as it is ordinarily used is an adjective in the comparative degree, and its meaning is older; and when used as a substantive, it means an older person. An elder in this sense becomes such with the passing of the years; but an elder in the church becomes such as the result of an appointment (Acts 14:23). This shows that the term "elder" as it occurs in the New Testament, is used in two different senses. The age of eligibility to the eldership is nowhere defined in the New Testament. This fact is probably because something more than mere age is necessary in those who serve in this capacity.

What God Expects of the Elders (Acts 20:28-31)

To exercise the oversight. Paul told the Ephesian brethren that the Holy Spirit had made them bishops or overseers, and Peter exhorted those to whom he wrote to exercise the oversight (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). This, then, is the divine arrangement, and there is no substitute for it. This duty cannot be delegated to others, with divine approval. The essential idea of overseership is that of directing or ruling, and it is therefore the duty of the elders to rule over and direct the work of the congregation (1 Tim. 5:17). But, inasmuch as the elders are over the congregation "in the Lord," it should be obvious that the ruling and directing must be done according to the Lord's will (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Pet. 5:2-3; Rom. 12:8). The same authority which makes it the duty of the elders to rule and direct also makes it the duty of the congregation to submit to their rule and direction **in the Lord** (Heb. 13:17). Only the faithful have the promise of an entrance into heaven, and the faithful are those who are obedient to their assigned duties.

To Be Shepherds to the Church

What are some of the duties of the present-day shepherds of the Lord's flock? (1) **They are to watch** (Acts 20:31; Heb. 13:17). Titus 1:10-11 is an example of the need for watching on the part of the elders. (2) **They are to be examples** to the congregation (1 Pet. 5:3; Acts 20:28). An example is something to be imitated. (3) **They are to help the weak** (Acts 20:35; 1 Thess. 5:14).

(4) **Discipline** of the church is their responsibility (1 Thess. 5:12-15; 1 Tim. 3:5). These few examples of the duties of the elders will give some idea of the diversified nature of the work which God expects of them. They are more than mere overseers or "business managers"; they are shepherds and teachers. The apostle Paul makes it plain that all of the elders are expected to be teachers of the word of the Lord (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). There are at least two things which are necessary for one to be a successful teacher, namely (1) he must have a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter to be taught; and (2) he must know and understand the needs of those who are to be taught.

The nature of the work which God expects elders to perform makes certain qualifications essential. If one will only take the time to read and study that which the New Testament says about the duties of elders, he will not have to be told that they will have to maintain a very high moral standard, if they are to succeed in their endeavor to discharge their duties and exercise an influence for good among their fellow Christians. Although it is easy to see that there is a need for qualifications which are commensurate with the position which the elders occupy and the work which they are obligated to do, we must remember that the Lord has not left it to us to name the traits of character which are essential. The required qualifications are given in detail in the New Testament. Part II of this series will deal with the qualifications and responsibilities of the elders.

PART 2

Qualifications & Responsibilities

First, let us consider 1 Tim. 3:1-7. Verse 1: "If a man desire the office of a bishop [elder] he desireth a good work." Desire signifies an earnest, eager, passionate wish. The work of an elder was and is hard, continual, and often painful. Preaching and teaching was expected of the elder then and so it is today. An elder must oversee the flock (members of the congregation) according to the word of God. A person must have this desire to serve as an elder because he truly wants to carry out the responsibility that accompanies the position. Under no circumstances should he desire the position because of its prestige, power, or authority. It appears in our present age that too many desire the office for just that purpose. The elder must certainly realize that he will be held accountable by the Lord for any abuse of his position. The Lord expects the elders to be men who are making an honest effort to prepare themselves for the work; or, the elders should be selected from among those who are already doing the best they can to do the work which is required of the overseers of the flock. There is no Scriptural authority for training men for the eldership **after** their appointment. They must, of course, continue to grow; but they must be qualified for the work before their appointment.

Verse 2: He must be blameless. He must be a person against whom no evil can be proved; one who is everywhere invulnerable. He must be one that has so conducted himself, as to put it out of reach of any person to prove that he is either unsound in a single article of the Christian faith, or deficient in the fulfillment of any duty incumbent on a Christian. He must be irreprovable; for how can he reprove that in others which they can reprove in him? He must be the husand of one wife. He must be a married man, but he should be no polygamist; and have only one wife, i.e., one at a time. It does not mean that, if he has been married, and his wife died, he should never marry another. The apostle's meaning appears to be this: that an elder should not be a man who has divorced his wife and married another; nor one that has two wives at a time. It does not appear to have been part of the apostle's design to prohibit a second marriage (as a result of the death of the wife). To quibble on this point is like that of tithing mint and cummin in religion, while neglecting the weightier matters of the law. Next, he must be vigilant. He must be ever alert to his responsibilities and work, be watchful in all things concerning the members of the congregation, and such will certainly require all his care, attention, and circumspection. For an elder to concern himself with the mundane, and administrative operations of the congregation is certainly foreign to God's plan for the establishment of the eldership. He must be sober. This means a man of sound mind; having a good understanding, and the complete government of all his passions; a man of learning, of an extensive and well cultivated mind, dispassionate, prudent, and sedate (not foolish). He must be of good behavior. Orderly, decent, grave, and correct in the whole of his appearance, carriage, and conduct. A clowning, rude, or boorish man should never be placed in an overseeing position in the church. The sour, sullen, and the boisterous should never be invested with a dignity which they would most infallibly disgrace. He must be given to hospitality. Literally a lover of strangers; one who is ready to receive into his house and relieve every stranger in need. A Christian elder, professing love to God and all mankind, preaching or teaching a religion, one half of the morality of which was included in, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," would naturally be sought by those who are in distress and destitute of friends. The elder must be apt to teach; one capable of teaching; not only wise himself, but ready to communicate his wisdom to others. One whose delight is to instruct the ignorant and thoses who are out of the way. He must be a preacher and a teacher; an able, zealous, fervent, and assiduous pastor. He is no elder who has health and strength, and yet seldom or never preaches or teaches.

Verse 3: Not given to wine. This not only signifies one who is attached to wine, a winebibber or tippler, but also one who is imperious, abusive, insolent, whether through wine or otherwise. He must be no striker; not quarrelsome; not ready to strike a person who may displease him; no persecutor of those who may differ with him; not attempting to force his way through threats or intimidation; not prone, as one has wittingly said, "To prove his doctrine orthodox, by apostolic blows and knocks." He must not be greedy of filthy lucre; not desirous of base gain; not using base and unjustifiable methods to raise and increase his revenues; not trading or trafficking; for what would be honorable in a secular character, would be base and dishonorable in an elder. He musts be patient; meek, gentle, the opposite to a quarrelsome person. Where meekness and patience do not reign, gravity cannot exist, and the love of God cannot dwell. He must not be a brawler; not contentious or litigious, not arrogant, but quiet and peaceable. He must not be covetous. Not a lover of money; not desiring the office for the sake of its emoluments, its prestige, power, or the authority that proceeds with this high position. He who loves money will stick at anything in order to get it. Fair and foul methods are to him alike, provided they may be equally productive.

Verse 4: A Christian elder must rule well his own house. He must be one who properly presides over and governs his own family. One who has the command, of his own house, not by sternness, severity, and tyranny, but with all gravity; governing his household by rule, everyone knowing his own place, and each his own work. The husband, both by nature and appointment of God, is the head or governor of his own house (Eph. 5:22). Most Bible scholars as well as historians believe that when the Scriptures refer to children being in subjection, faithful, or obedient that such also includes their conversion to Christianity. The wife of an elder must be in submission to him in the Lord. No Christian wife should take it upon herself to dictate or direct her husband. Wives of elders especially, should

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be grave, and be an example for the young and older ladies of the congregation.

Verse 5: For if a man know not. Method is a matter of great importance in all the affairs of life. It is a true saying, "He that does little with his head must do much with his hands"; and even then the business is not half done for want of method and organization. He who has a proper method and is well organized in the doing of business will show it in every affair of life, even the least. The work of the Lord is the most important business there is and it demands the highest type of organization in order that all may be done decently and in order. He who has a disorderly family has no government of that family; he probably has none because he has no method, no plan, no organization, and is not presiding. It was natural for the apostle to say, "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of our Lord?"

Verse 6: It is required that an elder be not a novice. Not a young plant, not recently ingrafted, that is, one not newly converted to the faith; one who has been of considerable standing in the church. If he have the qualifications outlined in verses 1 through 5, he may be safely trusted with the government of that congregation. It is impossible that one who is not long and deeply experienced in the ways of God can guide others in the way of life. Hence, elders are generally appointed to have the oversight of others, and thus more able to fulfill the demanding requirements and responsibilities placed upon them.

Verse 7: He should have a good report of them which are without. He should be one who had not previously been a profligate, or scandalous in his life. Such a person when converted may be a worthy member of Christianity, but it would be doubtful that God would other than rarely call such to work in the ministry as an elder. Them that are without means those citizens who are aware of the prospective elder's conduct and are themselves unconverted to Christ. Lest he fall into reproach, for his former scandalous or unsavory conduct. And the snare of the devil. Snares and temptations, such as he fell in and fell by before. This is called the snare of the devil; for, as he well knows the constitution of such person, and what is more likely to prevail, he infers that what was effectual before to their transgressions may be so still. Therefore, on all suitable occasions the devil tempts them to their old sins. Backsliders in general fall by those sins to which they were addicted previous to their conversion. Former inveterate habits will revive in him who does not continue to deny himself, and watch unto prayer. It is doubtful that man who has lived a scandalous life which may have consisted of debauchery, stealing, cheating, lying, dishonesty, and the like, and was then converted, even wholly and sincerely, and his sins forgiven, would be well spoken of, and highly esteemed, in the community by honorable persons, as well as by those with whom he formerly associated.

Now, let us go to Titus 1:5-9. Verse 5: Ordain elders in every city. This statement by Paul to Titus indicates that a plurality of elders were to be ordained.

Verse 6: Having faithful children. Whose family is converted to God. It would have been absurd to employ men to govern the church whose wife and children were not in subjection to him. It is an apostolic maxim that he who cannot rule his own house cannot rule the church of our Lord. (See comments on 1 Tim. 3:4-5 above.)

Verse 7: Not self-willed. He is not to be one who is determined to have his own way in everything; setting up his own judgment as being superior to that of all others; expecting all to pay homage to his understanding. Such an elder in the church can do little good, and may even do much mischief. Not soon angry. Not a choleric man; one who is irritable; who is apt to be inflamed on every opposition; one who has

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not proper command over his own temper.

Verse 8: A love of hospitality. A lover of strangers. (See comments under 1 Tim. 3:2.) A lover of good men. A lover of goodness or of good things in general. Sober; prudent in conduct. Just in all his dealings. Totally honest, possessing the highest integrity attainable. Holy in his heart. Righteous; complete love of God and his fellowmen. Temperate. Self-denying and abstemious in his food and raiment; not too nice on points of honor, nor magisterially rigid in the exercise of his ecclesiastical functions.

Verse 9: Holding fast the faithful word. Conscientiously retaining, and zealously maintaining, the true Christian doctrine, or confession of faith.

Finally, let us consider 1 Peter 5:1-4. Verse 1: The elders which are among you. Here again we get evidence that there is to be a plurality of elders. Peter then goes on to instruct the elders in their responsibilities to the flock (members of the congregation).

Verse 2: Feed the flock. Take the oversight. Properly discharge the office of elder. Not by constraint. The office was and is laborious and hard. Elders are to feed the flock of a given congregation. The responsibilities are strenuous and awesome. An elder may be called upon at midnight by a troubled member. The elder cannot say "See me tomorrow, I am in bed!" No, his response must be "I'll be there without delay." And then he must get up and go. Not for filthy lucre. Can the office of the elder be for monetary gain? Of course not. It must be for the love of God and for the love of his flock that he has the responsibility to shepherd, and his earnest and burning desire to be their servant, to help, aid, assist, and teach. But of a ready mind. Doing all for Christ's sake, and through love to immortal souls.

Verse 3: Neither as being lords over God's heritage. Peter here comes down hard on the elders and is teaching that bishops (elders) are appointed to feed the flock, to guide an defend it, not to fleece and waste it. And in humility, self-abasement, self-renunciation, and heavenly mindedness, they are to be examples to the flock, moulds of a heavenly form, into which the spirits and lives of the flock may be case, that they may come out after a perfect pattern. This qualification is undoubtedly the hardest of all for man to conquer, for it is human nature to seek glory, desire prestige, and exercise authority over his fellowmen. Any elder in the church of our Lord, who is not effectively carrying out this requirement surely brings condemnation upon himself. Elders must never make unilateral decisions on momentous matters affecting the church without presenting such matters before those they shepherd and lead. Always must the congregation be brought in and given consideration. Failure to do this can create dissention and trouble in the church. There is a distinct difference between shepherding the flock with good patience and love and care, and forcing the congregation to accept decisions which the elders themselves think to be their prerogative and responsibility alone. Doing the latter also violates the charge that elders must not be self-willed. (See Titus 1:7.)

Verse 4: When the chief shepherd. That is, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose is the flock, and who providest the pasture, and from whom, if an elder is legally called to the most responsible and arduous work and has performed those responsibilities according to the Lord's calling shall be appropriately rewarded and shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Such an elder will obtain an eternal nearness and intimacy with the glorious God. One who has not fulfilled the awesome responsibility which he has desired to perform, will be required to account to the Lord for his malfeasance, and failure to shepherd the flock as required by the Lord's teachings.

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PART 3

The Selection & Appointment of Elders

Read and study Acts 6:1-6. A superficial study may hastily conclude that very little is said in the New Testament regarding the selection of elders in the church. As a matter of fact, there is no specific reference to such matter. However, if all would take the time, and will make the effort to consider all that is said by the inspired men, it will become apparent that enough has been recorded to guide any congregation in doing that which is pleasing to God concerning such selection and appointment. There are some things in connection with the work of the church which must be carefully set forth in specific terms, in order that God's will may be accomplished. This is especially true in matters of faith; for no one can do by faith that about which God has not spoken (Rom. 10:17). But this is not always true in the realms of methods and expediency. If the Lord had attempted to govern the church in all things by specific rules and regulations the world itself, to use a figure from John (John 21:35), would scarcely be able to contain the books that should be written. Such a plan would have required that something be said regarding every new and different situation which might arise in connection with both individuals and congregations. But that is not the way the Lord governs His church. There are some general principles revealed in the New Testament which cover any and all situations; and if they are strictly adhered to, along with the actual information which is given in the Scriptures on the subject, those who are trying to please the Lord will have little trouble in meeting with His approval. Two of the principles are to be found in 1 Cor. 10:31 and 14:40.

Let us begin with the selection of the men who are to serve as elders. As mentioned above, nothing is recorded specifically as to the method of selection of elders. McGarvey notes however, "Those who are willing to be guided by the slightest indications of the will of God, in preference to their own judgment, will find sufficient information to satisfy them." While nothing is recorded of the selection of elders, there are examples of the manner in which other men are chosen to serve the church; and since the principle in all such instances is the same, it is fair to assume that the methods employed in the cases which are recorded will meet the Lord's approval.

The inspired record says that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in the churches which they established on their first missionary journey (Acts 14:23), and Paul left Titus in Crete for the same purpose (Titus 1:5); but nothing is said about the manner in which the men who were appointed were selected. However, in the case of the deacons of Acts 6, it is expressly stated that the church was to do the selecting, while the apostles were to do the appointing; and since the matter of appointing is uniformly stated in each instance cited, it is fair to suppose that **the church** was charged with the choosing in each case (1 Cor. 16:3-4; Acts 16:1-3). Why would the church (congregation) be charged with choosing persons of lesser responsibilities than those with greater spiritual guidance over the congregation? It is true that different words are used for "appoint" in Acts 14:23 and 6:3; Titus 1:5, but there is no practical difference in their meaning. Acts 6:3 and Titus 1:5 use a word which means appoint, put in charge, ordain; while Acts 14:23 the meaning is appoint, install, and such is the function of the evangelist (preacher).

Milligan lists six reasons (in his book **The Scheme of Redemption**) to show that it is the purpose of Christ for the church to select all of its own officers. They are:

(1) The church is now, under Christ, a self-governing and self-perpetuating body. The miraculous helps which were necessary at the beginning were only temporary, and passed away with the completion of the New Testament Scriptures (Eph. 4:11-16).

(2) The church itself, and not the ministry of the church, is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).

(3) The church itself is the heritage of God, and all of its ministers are but its servants (1 Pet. 5:3; 2 Cor. 4:5).

(4) The members of the church in Jerusalem were required to choose their own deacons, notwithstanding the presence of the most august and impartial body of Christian ministers ever found in any one congregation on earth (Acts 6:3, 5).

(5) Timothy was recommended to Paul as a man well qualified for the evangelical work, by the brethren of Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:1-3). It is well enough to observe that in the case of deacons, the men were chosen by the members of the congregation in which they were to serve; but in the case of an evangelist, whose work would not necessarily be limited to a single congregation, it is both becoming and proper that two or more churches should unite in recommending him.

(6) It was the custom of the primitive churches to choose their own messengers and agents, even for temporary services (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:18-19, 22-23).

It should be kept in mind that the entire congregation has a responsibility in the selections of the servants of the church (preacher, elders, deacons, and others), but each member should endeavor to make sure that his actions are always in keeping with such principles as those stated in 1 Cor. 10:31; 14:40; and Col. 3:17. This can only be done when one shows the proper respect for everything which has been revealed regarding a given situation. For instance, no one has the Scriptural right to propose a man for office who cannot meet the apostolic requirements; and neither does one have the right to object to one who does measure up to them. Any member therefore has the God-given privilege of recommending and endorsing any man for a position whom he feels is properly qualified, and to oppose anyone whom he thinks is not qualified; but he is also under obligation to listen to the reason of others, for it is possible that he might not be fully informed regarding the situation in question, in which case he would be mistaken in his contention. But when each member of the congregation does his best to inform himself properly, and is actuated by the spirit of Christ, there will be a minimum of trouble in arriving at a satisfactory agreement regarding all such issues.

The Appointment of Elders

After the ones who are to serve the congregation as elders have been properly and Scripturally selected by the brethren, they should be ordained, appointed, installed, or set apart, to the work for which they were chosen; and this should be done in such a manner as to make the action which is taken, impressive to all who are concerned with it. While we are primarily concerned here with the appointment of elders, it will be helpful to us to consider the manner which other servants of the church were appointed for special work in the kingdom of Christ. The command of the Holy Spirit to the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-3) was not to qualify Barnabas and Paul for the work to which they had been called, but simply to set them apart unto it. Paul as an apostle, was not dependent upon those or other men for his qualifications to preach the gospel, as the first two chapters of Galatians plainly show. Furthermore, we learn from Hebrews 6:1-2 that the laying on of hands belongs to the doctrine of the first principles of Christ.

The Number to Be Appointed and the Tenure of Office

Everything which is said in the New Testament on the subject points to a plurality of elders in any congregation of the Lord's people, when it is fully set in order (Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; 20:17-28; Titus 1:5). Some probable reasons for the plurality of elders in each congregation are: (1) It would be impossible for one man to do the work which is required of elders. (2) The centralization of authority in religion has always been dangerous, since its tendency is to lead away from God, as may be seen in the great apostasy. (3) There is both safety and stability in the combined efforts of a plurality of qualified and dedicated servants of the Lord (Prov. 11:14; 15:22).

Each congregation, when fully set in

order, will have a plurality of elders. Others should be added as the needs arise. Some of those who are appointed will pass away, others may move to other locations, while still others may become unfaithful. The best of men, if they live long enough, will eventually reach the point when they can no longer function as they should; and this alone is enough to show that new men should be added to the list as circumstances permit. There is no passage in the New Testament which teaches that a man is an elder, by virtue of his appointment, in any place except the congregation in which the appointment was originally made. Neither is there any Scriptural justification for saying that a man is to be retained in such position for life, in the event he becomes unfaithful, or violates the Scripture in his teachings, actions, or lack of proper actions. There is no such thing as a "lifetime" appointment as an elder, for any other officer of the congregation (deacon, preacher, etc.) (Acts 20:28-30; 3 John 9-12). Each congregation should have as many elders as its needs demand, and its opportunities justify. Two extreme views have been advanced as to length of time that an elder should serve, namely, (1) They should be selected and appointed annually; and (2) they should serve for life, regardless of what their future may be. But inasmuch as the truth is usually found between extremes, it appears reasonable to say that elders should serve as long as they remain in the congregation which appointed them, are faithful and able to do their work. If some condition should arise which would cause any of them to become a detriment to the church, the one so affected should remove himself from his position voluntarily; but if he will not do that, then the congregation, following the principles set forth in 1 Cor. 10:31; 14:40, should see to it that he is retired (2 Thess. 3:6; Rom. 2:11). Elders, as is true in the case of preachers, should not be retained by the **congregation,** in their official capacity, after the days of their usefulness are over. A final point that must be clearly understood is that preachers may not select elders, deacons, or any other officer in the congregation. And neither do the elders have authority to select additional elders, deacons, or the preacher. These are responsibilities of the congregation as a whole as Scriptures plainly show.

It is the responsibility of the members to insist that the elders measure up to the qualifications laid down for them, and be faithful in the performance of their duties. When elders begin to lord it over the flock (insist that their way must be adhered to, or force the members to comply with their demands which are not in conformance with the Bible, or through threats of discipline, then action must be taken by the congregation to correct the elders in their ways or retire them). It is in the interest of the cause of Christ, therefore, and for its peace and happiness, that every follower of the Lord should learn what God's will is regarding the organization of the local church. This knowledge can only come by a thorough, and constant study of the Holy Scriptures, in order to learn what the Lord expects, and what He teaches. Under no conditions should members of the Lord's church blindly accept and follow what men teach, but should verify such teaching, from the Scriptures, if there is any doubt in their minds as to the veracity of the teaching of men. The obligations of elders and members of the church are mutually binding. If it is the duty of the elders to preach and teach, it is also manifestly the duty of the other members of the church to receive their lawful instructions; and if it is the duty of the former to rule, it is equally the duty of the latter to submit to all their acts of discipline, providing they are in harmony with the law of Christ; for we should remember that the elders "are over us only in the Lord" (1 Thess. 5:12).

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Tillet S. Teddlie Is Honored

Dallas, Texas. Tillet S. Teddlie, widely known hymn composer and gospel preacher, was honored for his 100th birthday on June 2 at the Prestoncrest church of Christ in Dallas. Teddlie's centennial birthday was commemorated with an old-time Sunday afternoon singing. He was born on June 3, 1885, at Swan, Texas, and currently resides at Hilltop Haven retirement home at Gunter, Texas.

Teddlie is the composer of such well-known gospel hymns as "Worthy Art Thou," "Heaven Holds All to Me," "Angels Are Singing," and "We Shall Meet Some Day." Perhaps his best known hymn is the communion song "The Lord's Supper (When We Meet in Sweet Communion)." Teddlie is a member of the Skillman Avenue church in Dallas.

WBS Teacher Does Own Follow-Up

For the past six years brother Darrel Foltz has made the journey to Nigeria to do follow-up on his own World Bible School students. This year, he left Kansas City on January 2 and flew to Nigeria. During the course of his visit, brother Foltz renewed acquaintances with former WBS students who are now Christians, visited preacher's meetings, contacted new students, studied with denominational preachers who had been expelled for refusing to teach the doctrine of their denominations, preached in churches he had helped to plant on previous trips, and taught whenever the opportunity was presented. By journey's end, 64 souls had been baptized into Christ.

Directory of Northeast Churches Is Published

Danbury, Conn. The Danbury, Conn., church of Christ has recently published the **1985 Directory of Churches of Christ in New England.** Statistics and information for the directory were compiled by David Tarbet.

The statistics show that net growth of church membership among the New England churches has increased by three percent over the past year. The New England states are Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont. There are now 106 churches with 7,131 members. A breakdown of growth percentages for each of the New England states is as follows:

Connecticut: 1,603 members, up five percent.

Maine: 754 members, down eight percent.

Massachusetts: 3,300 members, up eight percent.

New Hampshire: 770 members, down three percent.

Rhode Island: 130 members, down 17 percent.

Vermont: 574 members, up two percent.

Nairobi Church Receives Land Grant

Nairobi, Kenya. The Nairobi city government has recently given the fifteen churches of Christ in Nairobi title to five acres of land valued at $3 million. In return, the church must have the land developed within two years. Plans are presently underway for a church building and a Christian Vocational School. The fifteen congregations in the city will combine their memberships and work from the single location. If the land is not developed in the specified time, it will then be given to the Moslems.

To be sure that this unique opportunity is not wasted, the Eastwood church of Christ in Hutchinson, Kansas, is overseeing the fundraising drive in the United States to secure the $1 million needed to develop the property. Nairobi presents an extraordinary evangelistic opportunity. The churches there have grown at a rate of 1.7 million. Nairobi is the fastest growing and largest city in Kenya. The people of the city are easily approachable and are open to the gospel. Individuals or churches interested in helping should contact: TARGET NAIROBI, Eastwood Church of Christ, 2500 N. Plum, Hutchinson, Kansas 67502.

You may also call Berkley Hackett at (915) 672-8024.

Carolina Church News

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports directly to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. All correspondents should note that the Rock Hill Post Office Box has been discontinued. Items for publication must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Taylorsville. The new precher is Cletus Freeman, having moved from Texas.

Charlotte. Westside had a record attendance at their Homecoming on May 5. R.C. Walker, former preacher, was the guest speaker.

Statesville. David Pharr will speak at Abilene in a church growth series June 13-15. Two Abilene members recently received special honors in the Statesville newspaper. Being nominated for the "People's Choice Pride '85 Award" were Etta Lowery and Frank Eidson.

Statesville. Broad Street recently sent $1,400.00 for Ethiopian famine relief.

Wilmington. Pine Valley is raising funds to assist Brett Kirkman in missionary work in Australia.

Shallotte. A new congregation has been established. Presently they are meeting in the VFW building on Sunday mornings only. Contact F.W. Mattox in Wilmington for details.

Gastonia. Billy Nicks is scheduled to preach in a meeting June 9-12. Charles Stubblefield has been added to the eldership and B.J. Davis to the deacons.

Hendersonville. Wayne Scott will work with the church this summer. He is a Freed-Hardeman College student.

Shelby. Two men were appointed as elders of the Shelby congregation for the first time in its history. They are Jim Valentine and Charles Dowdy.

Wilston-Salem. The Brewer Road church has asked Phil Stapp to serve as pulpit minister.

Rockingham. On June 9, 1985, the church celebrates its 50th Anniversary. Special guest speakers on that day are former minister Bill Smith and Larry Eppley.

Burlington. David Bobbett will be working part time as Associate Minister with special emphasis on youth.

N.C. New Births

Pine Valley, Wilmington, 4; Albemarle, 2; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 1; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 9; Asheboro, 1; Eastchester, High Point, 1. Total: 18.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Spartanburg. Central reached a new attendance record on April 28 with 458 present for morning worship. The previous record was on a Sunday night with 440. The highest previous Sunday morning was 355.

Barnwell. "The Barnwell Church of Christ is pleased to report that the Jack Cooper family was recently selected as Tri-County Family of the Year by a panel of judges from entries including Barnwell, Bamberg and Allendale counties. As well as being involved in statewide religious activities (including Palmetto Bible Camp) the Coopers are also active in scouting, scholastic, and civic groups, and have won many honors and awards for their participation in these programs. The Barnwell congregation is very proud to have such a fine family serving with them."

S.C. New Births

Cokesbury Rd., Greenwood, 1; Fairview, Spartanburg, 4; Myrtle Beach, 1; Edgewood, Greenville, 1; Central, Spartanburg, 1; Essex Village, Charleston, 3; Northeast, Greenville, 2; Crawford Rd., Rock Hill, 1. Total: 14.

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 27, NO. 7, JULY 1985

C289.21
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THE BOOK OF LIFE . . .

Some names not found (Rev. 20:15; Lk. 13:28).

He knows us by name. Ex. 33:17; Jn. 10:3; Phil. 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:19 (a personal and precise list)

Greatest blessing. Lk. 10:17-20; Rev. 3:4-5; 20:12; 21:27 (if not saved, what else matters?)

Names written at birth (learn about that book from this book). Gal. 3:26-27; Jn. 3:5; Acts 2:37-47; He. 12:23

Some blotted out (Rev. 3:5; Ex. 32:31-33; Rev. 22:19; Lk. 8:13; 1 Cor. 10:12).

. . . IS MY NAME WRITTEN THERE?

— David Pharr

editorial

CHRISTIANS SHOULD MARRY CHRISTIANS

To marry or not to marry? is a question everyone is granted (in this country at least) the right to answer for himself. And if he chooses to marry, he has the right (and obligation) to select his own mate. But the right to choose does not guarantee that the right choice will always be made. In fact, from the number of divorces and troubled homes it seems that the contrary is more likely. God, in His holy word, has neither commanded nor prohibited marriage to certain individuals, whether along religious, philosophical, social, or mental lines. That is, He has not said in precise terms that a Christian cannot marry an atheist (unless 2 Cor. 5:14 be so interpreted), a Catholic, a Baptist, or a moral man who makes no pretense of religion. God has left that choice up to each of us. But (and this is vital) He has not left us without some guidelines or principles by which to make the choice.

One guideline is that Christians are to devote their lives to Christ. They are dead to self and alive to Him (Gal. 2:20). For them to live is Christ (Phil. 1:21) — that is, Christ lives in and through them. How, then, could one live such a devoted life to Christ and be bound to one who has no love for Him at all? Thus from this principle we believe it is safe to draw the conclusion that a Christian should marry only one who would help and encourage him in his service to Christ. And who could do that better (or who could do it at all) than another Christian? Of course this cannot be constructed as a command. It is just something that makes good practical sense . . . and nothing else does.

To show just how much sense it makes, we quote the following (which may startle you if you take a close look at it) from the Campbell Street Bulletin of Jackson, Tennessee. Ray Hawk is the author:

"Who you marry may affect your eternal destiny. It could cause the Christian to fall away from the faith **if** that person has a weak faith. On the other hand, the unbelieving mate may be converted to Christ as a result of that marriage (1 Cor. 7:14). Bobby Key has worked with the church in Miami, Oklahoma, for over twenty years. Brother Key kept records of 143 Christians who married over that twenty-year period. Here are his statistics.

Christians married to unbelievers:

79: Total
57: Left the Lord
22: Remained faithful
14: Converted their mates to Christ
25: Divorced

Christians married to Christians:

64: Total
5: Left the Lord
59: Remained faithful to Jesus
2: Divorced."

While this should not be viewed as a scientific study (it is just what happened in

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Howard Winters, Editor; David Pharr, Carolina News Editor; Dennis Conner, Brotherhood News Editor, Johnny Melton, Carolina Pulpit Editor.

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one church), it does show the high probability of one either leaving the Lord or experiencing divorce if he marries a non-Christian, the divorce rate being approximately 32 percent. But if you marry a Christian, the high probability is that you will remain faithful and build a lasting home, the divorce rate being less than four percent. So regardless of how we turn this, we come up with the same conclusion: Christians should marry Christians.

FIGHTING THE LORD'S ANOINTED

One of the saddest chapters in Israel's history is that of Saul after God had rejected him from being king and had anointed David to reign in his stead (read 1 Sam.). Saul knew that he had been rejected, and he knew that David had been anointed. But a great deal of his time, and Israel's resources, was from that time on until the day of his death spent in trying to kill David. He tried time and again as an individual to thrust him through with a spear. But each time David was able to escape safely from his presence. This did not stop Saul. He would assemble the whole army and spend weeks (and millions of Israel's wealth) in searching for David to kill him. Although Saul's plans were always foiled (mostly by himself), he had forgotten who the real enemy was (the nations around Israel) and was employing his whole armed forces trying to kill the Lord's anointed. No wonder Saul confessed, "I have played the fool." (1 Sam. 26:21.)

We are so much like Saul in the Lord's church today that it ought to make us tremble. We have seemingly forgotten who our real enemies are (the devil and his worldly forces) and are spending much of our time fighting one another — spending the Lord's resources to fight the Lord's anointed! We were forcefully reminded of this when Terry Wheeler sent us the following paragraph from the loving and concerned heart of T.B. Larimore. Read it and apply it to numerous situations in the Lord's church today where brethren use their whole time and effort in verbal battle (both orally and written) one with another while a lost world plunges into an endless hell for lack of hearing the truth. It is enough to make us fall down on our faces and plead, "Oh, Lord, forgive us of our foolishness." But hear Larimore:

"These be times when the faithful and the true should know no division, but should stand as one man for the cause of Christ, clad in the panoply of heaven, with hearts full of sympathy for the sorrowing, suffering, sighing sons and daughters of men, battling on from victory to victory till God shall call them home. Can we afford to be wrangling and disputing and cherishing unkind feelings toward each other, when souls all around us are living in the shadow and darkness of sin? The firemen who would stop when a home or city is burning, the members of a life-saving station who would stop when some mother's child is drowning to discuss some little matters of difference, would be worthy of praise for fidelity to duty for all time to come, in comparison with the man who, claiming to be a Christian, would sulk in his tent in times like these. There is more than a blazing city or a drowning child involved in this work. The sweetest joys earth can give and all the bliss of heaven forever, for ourselves, our friends, our neighbors, for those that know us best and love us most, are involved in the conduct of each one of us now."

LIVING WHAT WE LEARN

We are a people who put a tremendous amount of emphasis on Bible study (and we should because the Scriptures are our only source of faith and practice) and correctness of faith (and we should because wrong faith leads to wrong actions). But with many of us, who are the strongest for correct faith, we are extremely short on putting

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our faith into action — we are strong in theory and weak in practice. That is, we are short on practicing the morality we learn from the word of God. While not agreeing with the following in every detail, there is enough truth in it to cause us to pause and ponder.

In **The Screwloose Lectures** (in the book Screwloose is a visiting demon lecturing at the Underworld University to young demons on how to entice men and lead them away from Christ) Screwloose urges his students to stress the responsibility to believe correctly. He says (and keep in mind this is a method urged by a demon to entice us away from the Lord of glory): "In our warfare with the Enemy [Christ — HW] and His host [Christians — HW] we can usually ignore the person who concentrates on **what** to believe; he usually misses the more significant issue of **how** to believe." This **what** to believe in contrast to **how** to believe means that he concentrates on the correctness of what he learns rather than putting his belief into practice. In short, correctness of doctrine becomes far more important than correctness of practice. Or as Screwloose puts it, "Many humans will be so proud of believing the right things they will never even consider a need to act on their belief." He concludes: "To say that **how** men believe is more important than **what** they believe is simply to say that God asks humans to respond with trust and obedience to what He has shown them. He does not ask them to master every verse of the Bible. Since this is what He wants, what we want is a generation of Christians who care passionately about **what** they and others believe, but never trouble themselves with questions about whether they live what they learn." (**The Screwloose Lectures,** Larry Richards, pp. 54-55, 164.)

It is doubtful that the author of **The Screwloose Lectures** had us in mind when he wrote this, but he certainly puts his finger on a sore spot (or more accurately, what should be a sore spot). We have been preaching the truth now for 35 years and have never to our knowledge for a conscious moment doubted that we have the truth on the fundamental aspects of Christianity. However, on the practical side our experience has been the exact opposite. We had not been a Christian very long until we learned that the church was filled with people who gossip (run down others out of a heart of bitterness), lie, cheat, steal, drink, misrepresent one another (and others), refuse to pay their debts, and a thousand other sins of dishonesty. They are often filled with bitterness, hatred, jealousy, strife, etc. Many are no less depressed, do not worry less, and are just as susceptible to drug abuse, alcohol, adultery, broken homes, etc., as the world around them. And it seems that the more concerned one becomes about sound doctrine the less likely he is to be concerned about purity in morals. If we have not read Screwloose wrongly, some of his students have had a heyday among us, leading us astray at the very point where our light to the world should shine the brightest. Do not misunderstand us: it is indispensable to have correct faith (based upon the testimony of Scripture) but correct faith without the correct action it is designed to produce is as useless and as worthless as a barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9; Matt. 21:19).

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ALL HAVE SINNED

There is no escape from the conclusion that all have sinned. Both the Bible (Rom. 3:9, 23; 5:12) and experience confirm it. But perhaps one of our greatest weaknesses is a failure to admit this, in a meaningful way, to ourselves. We have no trouble in admitting that all others have sinned, but with ourselves . . . well, that is different. Our attitude brings to mind a little story that has proven to be of intense interest.

It is said that Frederick the Great of Prussia once visited a prison and talked with the inmates. Almost all of the prisoners claimed to be innocent of all wrongdoing and the victims of false accusations (and perhaps a few were innocent but certainly not all who made the claims). However, one man did confess that he had committed a crime and had gotten what he deserved. Frederick is said to have ordered the release of this prisoner, stating, "The man obviously has no business in here corrupting all these innocent people."

Now if we reverse this we may be able to see our own situation. We often criticize or condemn other members of the church for their imperfections (which essentially says that they are imperfect but we are not). We even criticize the church (the human side of it) for not being what we think it ought to be (this essentially means that if all the other members were like ourselves there would be no imperfection in the church). In short, one must conclude from what we often hear that some of us are seeking a perfect church in which our own perfection will feel more at home. But is this not the wrong attitude and the wrong approach? Does it not result from a failure to recognize our own frailty and liability to sin? The one who recognizes that he is a sinner (saved only because he has been washed in the blood of the Lamb) does not seek perfection in the church and in others. And he knows that if he ever found a perfect church and became a part of it his presence would automatically make it imperfect. Or if he ever associated with perfect Christians his influence would most likely corrupt them (cf. 1 Cor. 15:33). He thus satisfies himself working with those who are less than perfect because he recognizes his own imperfections.

No one should have more sympathy for or compassion on the imperfect than one who is less than perfect himself.

* * *

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"Keep Your Hands Off!"

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

Sounds ugly, doesn't it? But who is the offensive one, the one approaching or the one being approached? As a matter of fact, certain people hate to be touched except in the most exceptional circumstances. Even in the church, there are those who would just as soon stay arm's length from others, physically speaking.

Now before we more affectionate types swell up in indignation and quote the "holy kiss" passages, let us take some time to see things through a little bit. Let us "do unto others" with courtesy (1 Pet. 3:8) in this matter also.

There are various reasons for feeling possessive about one's private space — the actual space directly around the body — which are not prudish or prideful.

1. Some may have been brought up not to touch another unless romantically inclined. This would make a hug a "come on." One might do it inadvertently, of course, but the mind-set would still encourage flirtation. This is a cultural reality that must be addressed for propriety's sake (Rom. 14:16).

2. An ugly or unpleasant experience in the past may cause some to back off from "super" affectionate people. You know, "once burned, twice shy," when affection has been used to abuse.

3. Others may have physical conditions that make displays of affection actually painful.

4. There are those burdened by jealous spouses who back off to avoid unseemly appearances that further complicate home life.

Brethren, these are legitimate reasons people may feel uncomfortable when we attempt to show strong "family" ties at church. Courtesy demands these people be respected for their feelings.

On the other hand, Christians are to be an affectionate people. The holy kiss is mentioned some five times in God's word (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; and 1 Pet. 5:14). It is graphically portrayed at Paul's tearful departure from the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:37-38). One thing about this example — these are all men crying on each other. Perhaps a good gauge for our own use of affection in church is, "Am I as affectionate toward my own sex as I am toward the opposite sex?" If the answer is "No," then the affection may not be as holy as we assume.

We Christians do touch each other, but only in holy and appropriate ways. Therefore let not him who hugs despise him who hugs not. And let not him who hugs not judge him who hugs, for God has received him. Does showy affection make you feel uncomfortable? Say so. The rest of us love you enough to listen and understand.

Fellowship — Clarifying the Issue

Jack Simons, Clemmons, NC

Much controversy exists among us today concerning the difficult issue of fellowship. It is not always easy to draw the line where fellowship begins or ends (the eternal fate of one's soul rests with God), but sometimes this line must be drawn. Some among us would draw the line so strictly as to exclude some whom God accepts — those who test fellowship concerning the use of only one cup in observing the Lord's supper, whether or not one believes in capital punishment, whether we use only the King James Version, etc. Others extend the line so far as to include those whom God has rejected — those who refuse to test fellowship concerning those who use mechanical instruments in worship, observing the Lord's supper on days other than

Sundays, allowing baptism for reasons other than salvation and remission of sins, etc.

We clarify the issue of fellowship when we clarify the issues that promote or prevent it. Fellowship can exist only where the parties involved agree (Amos 3:3). This does not require **total** agreement, but it does demand respect for God's word without compromise and faithful membership in the Lord's church. We cannot be in fellowship with those outside the Lord's church and/or in a denomination practicing false religion, for to be a brother in Christ one must be in His church (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:12-13), worshipping in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). Those outside the Lord's church may be erring brothers, but they are not **brothers in Christ** for no one outside of Christ's church can be in Christ!

The arguments that ensue often cloud the issue. For example, it may be possible to fellowship someone who is not necessarily opposed to using the instrument, but does not do so and is not a member of a denomination that does but faithfully assembles with the saints. On the other hand, fellowship cannot exist with those who are members of a denomination and worship with use of the instrument. Again, we may fellowship one who believes we must be baptized to obey God and be saved though he does not think a specific phrase "for remission of sins" is the only way to effect that baptism. However, we cannot fellowship one who is a member of a denomination and believes baptism has nothing to do with salvation or remission of sins, advocating we are saved before and/or without baptism, though he might allow we should be baptized to in some way please God or join a denomination.

The fact is, fellowship does not make Christians; it strengthens them! One becomes and remains a Christian when he obeys the gospel (Heb. 5:9; Rom. 6:17-18), is added to the Lord's church by God (Acts 2:47), and continues steadfast in Christ (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 John 1:7). Fellowship is predicated on man's adherence to God's will (Rom. 16:16-19; 1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Cor. 1:10) and faithful membership in the one true church (Rom. 16:16; Eph. 4:15-16). Hence, there can be no fellowship between those in the body and therefore in Christ and those outside of it and Him (2 John 4-11), between those who worship in spirit and truth and those who worship according to the doctrines of men (John 4:23-24; Matt. 15:8-9; 1 Cor. 10:20; Gal. 1:6-9), or between the saved and the lost (2 Cor. 6: 14-18). Here the line must be drawn or it cannot be drawn anywhere.

Let us always lovingly keep the door of fellowship open to all faithful Christians, but we can never extend it beyond the essentials that mark entrance into the one true body of Christ, Scriptural worship that edifies this body and glorifies God, and faithful membership in His body. Let all brothers in Christ be in fellowship and let us be ready (1 Pet. 3:15) to share this fellowship with all who will obey Christ and be faithful members of His church. Let us never compromise these truths, realizing that no attempt to fellowship those outside Christ as if they were in Christ will make them faithful Christians or promote Christian unity — it will only undermine such and cause us to lose fellowship with God (James 4:4; Eph. 5:11; 1 John 1:3).

What You Do Not See

Ray Winn, High Point, NC

A recent Gallup poll indicates that the number of families affected by problem drinking has increased an astonishing 50 percent since 1974. This poll shows that 18 percent of the families of this nation are beset by problem drinking. At the 28th International Congress on Alcohol and Alcoholism a Dr. Kinsley described the damage to the human brain resulting from problem drinking. He indicated that as a result of alcohol abuse, the brains of skid-row drunks revealed such extensive destruction of cells that they could not be used in teaching normal brain structures to medical students. He stated that even social drinking results in the death of as many as 10,000 brain cells at one time. One needs to realize that brain cells are not replaced when they are destroyed as are those in other parts of the body.

Social drinking is a real problem in the Lord's church today. Multitudes have bought the message of the TV commercials showing all the happy times and "it doesn't get any better than this." But we have to realize that this is a make-believe world presented by the advertising industry to sell a product that could not be given away if the real world was shown. You do not see the abused mates and children of the alcoholic. You do not see the broken homes. You do not see the actual cost to society in loss of productivity. You do not see the disease-ridden hospital patients. You do not see the brilliant minds of doctors, lawyers, professors, and business professionals which are literally pickled by alcohol. They never show the mangled bodies of the highway accident victims. What you do not see is the real world of alcoholic consumption.

There is no place in the life of the Christian for alcoholic drink! The writer of Proverbs says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Prov. 20:1.) The siren call of the world must be resisted and recognized for what it is — Satan's deceptive lies sent forth to delude and damn the multitudes of the earth.

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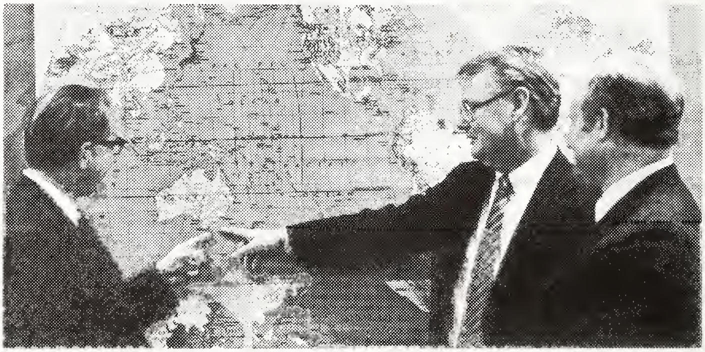

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Considering Christ

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

In Matthew 16:13ff, an episode of prime importance in the ministry of Jesus is recorded. It is here that Matthew relates to us Peter's confession that Jesus "is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Though the multitudes thought highly of Jesus by human standards, they did not think highly enough: for He was more than just a human. Through the words and works of Jesus, God had revealed the true nature of His Son to all who would believe. Thus, Peter was able to see beyond the superficial opinions of the populace and into the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18).

What exactly does it mean to say that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God?" The proposition has reference to two things: (1) the office of Jesus and (2) the divine nature or deity of Jesus.

The first part of the proposition, "Jesus is the Christ," refers to the office or appointed place of Jesus in God's plan for redeeming man. Henry W. Everest said, "The words Christ and Messiah, the one Greek and the other Hebrew, both mean anointed. Among the Jews, prophets, priests and kings were anointed as a consecration (initiation — BG) to their office (see Ex. 28:41; I Kings 19:16 — BG). Interpreted in this light, the Christ is the prophet, priest and king for the human race." (**The Divine Demonstration**, p. 19.)

However, there is also a historical element concerning the Christ which should not be overlooked. That is, Jesus is the prophet, priest and king spoken about for hundreds of years by the prophets of the Old Testament and anxiously waited for by the Jewish nation (see Deut. 18:15-19; Ps. 110:4; Isa. 9:6-7). He was the subject of Old Testament prophecy (see Luke 24:44ff; Acts 3:18-26). Thus, "when it is affirmed that Jesus is the Christ, it is affirmed that He is the Messiah of Jewish promise, prophecy and longing expectation." (Everest, **op. cit.**, p. 19.)

The second part of the proposition, "Jesus is the Son of the living God," has been misunderstood by many. Although the phrase "Son of God" sometimes indicates a filial (father-son) relationship between God and Jesus (Luke 1:32; John 3:16), it is often used to affirm Jesus' deity (John 5:17-18; 10:30-36).

In the Scripture, the term "son of" is frequently used to describe a person's nature. Hence, James and John are called "the sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17), not because that was their father's name but because of their often rash dispositions (see Luke 9:51-56). Similarly, Joseph the Levite is given the name Barnabas meaning "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36), because of his encouraging nature (see Acts 11:23). So the phrase "Son of God" is often used in reference to Jesus to indicate His nature, which is that of God! This nature is seen in Isaiah 9:6-7 where five names or titles (ASV) are prophetically given to Jesus. These represent not actual names by which He would be called, but rather the nature that He would possess (see Col. 2:9 for a good commentary on Isaiah 9:6-7). Jesus is the Son of God and not a son of God (as men and angels are), because He alone reflected what God was like since He was such (John 1:1, 18; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). Thus, to call Jesus the Son of God is to call Him God the Son. Since the Old Testament foretold that the Messiah would be the Son of God (Ps. 2:2, 7) and that the Christ would be of divine nature (Ps. 110:1; Matt. 22:41-46), I believe that Peter uses this phrase in Matthew 16:16 to indicate his belief in the deity of Jesus.

Peter's newfound knowledge concerning Jesus was incomplete at this stage for, although he understood who Jesus was, he did not understand what that meant (v. 21-23). Over the final months of Jesus' ministry he would learn. Yet with the confession he makes at Caesarea Philippi, he lays the foundation for anyone who would follow Jesus. "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:11.)

"Who do you say that I am?"

New Congregation

John White, Union, SC

This letter is intended to introduce you to a new congregation of God's people who have begun meeting in Union, S.C. Our address is 301 S. Pinckney St., P.O. Box 1172, Union, S.C. 29379. You may want to call us at 1-803-427-1347.

Though all of our brethren are aware that our only guide is God's word, still we thought it good to share with you these things. Of course we are talking about New Testament Christianity as it is taught by our Lord through His word, the Bible.

1. No guide except God's holy word.
2. No name, but Christian.
3. No plan of salvation, except obedient faith to God's gospel plan of salvation.
4. No form of baptism to be obeyed other than that of immersion in water.
5. No basis for unity except the Biblical basis. (a) One God — the unity of worship. (b) One Lord — the unity of authority. (c) One Spirit — the unity of revelation. (d) One Body — the unity of organization. (e) One Faith — the unity of doctrine. (f) One Hope — the unity of destiny.
6. No church music other than "vocal" in the called assemblies.
7. No divine inspiration other than that already given through the holy word.
8. No uncertain remembrance of our Lord, rather we remember our Lord every Lord's day in communion.
9. No organization of leadership than that which is Biblical.

Thus, as Christians, we learn to be united in peaceful fellowship without compromise or violation of our consciences. Please feel free to visit with us at any and every opportunity you may have. Further, if we can be of help to you, please call us at 1-803-427-1347.

Presently we are enjoying about 75-100 in attendance and we are totally self-supporting. Already we have had two baptisms and several restorations.

Finally we ask that you place us on your mailing list in order for us to become aware of all of our brotherhood activities within our area.

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SEVEN ABOMINATIONS

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

A proverb is a short pithy sentence frequently repeated, expressing a well-known truth or common fact of life. The book of Proverbs may be called a guide to a happy or successful life. And indeed it would be if we would take the time to read the entire book carefully and prayerfully and apply the pearls of wisdom and methods of practical living contained in the book. The book of Proverbs stands before us as a proof that the Bible does not despise common sense and discretion. It impresses upon the heart of the reader, in a manner most forcible, the value of intelligence and prudence in meeting the problems that arise from day to day. Again and again it insists upon the doctrine that goodness is wisdom, and that meanness or vice is folly. It is replete with wise instructions concerning our behavior in life's common transactions, recognizing God as supreme and giving Him the place of supreme importance in the affairs of men. The fullest description of the book is found in the first chapter, which sets forth the wise and benevolent design of the entire book.

Proverbs 6:16-19 enumerates seven abominations (an abomination is a detestable action, a shameful vice, an object greatly disliked or abhorred) which draw the hatred and denunciation of God. These abominations are:

"There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood; a heart that deviseth wicked purposes, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that uttereth lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

This Scripture presents a photograph of a very ugly man. In any one of these seven vices there is sufficient power to mar the beauty of a personality. But, think, how very repellent is the personality in which all seven of the vices meet and dwell! If you will note the seven vices are all manifestations of hatred against one's fellowman. Each one is a violation of the law of love, a sin against God Himself; for He is the embodiment of love. We know when Jesus was asked by one of the scribes which was the greatest of all the commandments, He answered, "The first of all the commandments is that thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength — And the second is likewise namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31.) If one loves God he will love his fellowman; likewise he cannot love his fellowman and not love God — they must go hand in hand.

Haughty eyes. These are hateful because they unfit a man for service to his neighbors and for the reception of God's grace. They are proud, arrogant, disdainful, and contemptuous. In such eyes, pride and malice combine, both of which are condemned by Christ along with that of showing partiality.

A lying tongue. Hateful because of the destruction it works in society, especially so when it gives utterance to those untrue statements which destroy that which is more precious than gold, namely, a good reputation. When man cannot believe man, life becomes chaotic. Jesus in Matthew 19:18 teaches us that we must not bear false witness. Throughout the Bible both in the Old and New Testaments we find numerous references to the sin of lying, the danger of a lying tongue, the viciousness of untruthfulness.

Hands that shed innocent blood. This has always been hateful because of their cruelty. He that "hateth his brother is a murderer." As Christ tells in His sermon on the mount, "But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment." And Jesus warns Christians that wrongs must be corrected before their worship and gifts are acceptable. Hands that shed innocent blood or one who hates his brother has his hands and heart stained with that blood. Cain is one of the outstanding examples in the Bible of a man who shed innocent blood — he killed his brother, Abel, without cause and thus was made to suffer from that day forward. We know that David caused the shedding of innocent blood when he had Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, killed in order that he might satisfy his own lust for Bathsheba. We further know that David was made to suffer for this sin. God did not condone it even though David was God's chosen and one of the greatest men of God that ever lived.

A heart that deviseth wicked purposes is hateful because it indicates a life that is rotten to the core. When the heart, the center of life, plans in cold deliberation wicked words and wicked deeds, how dark is that life! Judas, one of the original 12 apostles, is an example of this abomination — he connived, he planned, and he worked with the scribes and the Pharisees to see that Jesus was turned over to them for a paltry sum of money. Job, on the other hand, we find would not under any circumstance forsake his Lord, and we of course know that while he originally lost all in God's testing, he, because of his faith, his fidelity, his loving heart for God, was then blessed twice over.

Feet that are swift in running to mischief are hateful because they express an eagerness to do unholy things. They do not wait, they do not walk, but they run on missions of malice. Categorized in this group would be those who delight in spreading rumors or gossip about others without foundation. They can hardly wait to tell others when they hear something unsavory about another — and you know the person who listens to such rumors and gossip is just as bad as the one who spreads them. Then there are those people who resort to stealing and lying that are to be considered as running to mischief! In this group we have those who would take advantage to get something for nothing, such as omitting or adding to their tax returns in order to gain some monetary advantage, or the person who when shopping is given in return too much change. They often give as their excuse for accepting this, "Well, the store has more money than I."

A false witness that uttereth lies has been marked and condemned by every code of law, ancient and modern. Because witnesses are unfaithful, good men have suffered immeasurably and evil men have escaped just retribution. Think about this sin for a moment! We touched on it earlier. And again the Bible is replete with warnings against this hateful act. This maligns a person's character. And a good character is something that every man wants. He wants to be well thought of by his fellowman. A good character takes years to build. But by lies from a false witness it can be torn down. People have been put in prison, have even been put to death because of the lies of another. Would we and all the world be truthful, what a better world it would be.

And he that soweth discord among brethren is an aversion to heaven, because such a person may undo valuable service of many years and lay waste to fine structures that have long been in the making. Matthew Henry has said, "Those that by tale-bearing and slandering, by carrying ill-natured stories, aggravating everything that is said and done, and suggesting jealousies and evil surmises, blow the coals of contention, are but preparing for themselves a fire of the same nature." We know that the New Testament says to "mark those that cause divisions among you." These persons are to be cast out of the church if they persist. And when you stop to think about it why would a person delight in sowing discord among others? What does he have to gain by such action? He must do it only for delight that he gets out of seeing constant upheaval and trouble among brethren! That type person must be a very unhappy, inferior, angry, and immature individual to begin with else he would see the advantages of love, peace, harmony, kindness, and the many other virtues that a person should possess if he is to live with himself and with God as well as his fellowman. A Christian is a peacemaker, not a peace-breaker.

If God hates these seven manifestations

of evil, so should we. If God places the stamp of disapproval upon them, so should we. God's man hates everything that God hates; he also loves everything that God loves.

We have looked upon the photograph of a very ugly man — a man clothed with seven unsightly garments — a man upon whose head falls the curse of a just God. In delightful contrast, let us take a look at the photograph of some attractive people — people adorned with seven lovely garments — people upon whom the benediction of heaven descends. This beautiful picture is found in Matthew 5:3-9, which reads:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

BACKFIRE

Letters To The Editor

Dear Howard:

Enclosed is a check for $96.00 for payment for 24 copies of **Commentary on Romans** at your special price of $4.00 per copy. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to purchase your excellent commentary at this great price! — Jim Coviello, Winston-Salem, NC

It is this kind of help and cooperation that gives us hope for the future. If you have not already gotten together such an order, why not do so now? For a limited time, we will still accept orders for 10 or more copies at $4.00 each. (If smaller churches cannot get 10 orders, send us what you can get and we will mail them to you also at $4.00.)

Dear Brother Winters:

Please send me another copy of your **Commentary on Romans.** It is excellent and needed. Please do all of the New Testament. — Phil Stonestreet, Fredrick, MD

We have now reached the point where we must depend on those who have purchased the commentary to tell others about it. To write notes on the whole New Testament is a pretty big request, but we will do our best to fill it if our work proves useful and the sales justify the publication of additional books. First Corinthians will soon be ready. Should we publish it?

Dear Howard:

I enjoy receiving and reading **Carolina Christian.** I have found many of the articles written by different preachers and individuals to be helpful to me through the years. I was especially impressed with Barry Fike's diagram and article concerning what to do with the erring. . . . Having lived and preached in the Carolinas for about 18 years, the work and progress is very dear to me, even though I am now preaching in Tennessee. I especially enjoy the church news. It enables me to find out what is being done, where it is being done, and by whom it is being done. Keep up the good work . . . and keep writing good commentaries. — Raymond H. Climer, Summitville, TN

Sweet and encouraging words from a dear friend and a long-time co-worker in the Carolinas.

Dear Howard:

Your **Commentary on Romans** is superb. You have written a book that teaches the truth in such a way that it can be understood by the immature and yet challenging to the more learned student. I look forward to your **Commentary on 1 Corinthians.** — James Meadows, Memphis, TN.

Few people in the world has meant more to us than James Meadows, and we trust his judgment. His words will therefore be seriously considered as we wrestle with the question, Should we try to publish more of our commentaries?

Dear Howard:

It is reported that more than 4000 abortions are performed daily in the United States alone and I do not do anything about it. This is partly because it seems that all of the people involved with the pro-life movement are aligned with denominational groups. What is a Christian to do? Keep silent? Surely not! Join a Baptist-sponsored protest? This does not seem right. Is there any group that is both effective and nondenominational? I hope you know of such a group so that Carolyn and I can work through it to help stop this murder of unborn children. I have no objection to others working to change our laws on abortion, but I cannot support their work with my money and efforts because of the religious doctrine that goes along with their good work. . . . Let me close by thanking you for writing **Commentary on Romans** and by asking a question: When will we see more like it? I cannot wait for the next book in what I hope will eventually be a commentary on the New Testament. — Jim Thompson, High Point, NC

How many of us have felt the same frustration as brother Thompson in our effort to combat the insidious evil of abortion! While we do not believe that it is wrong per se to join hands with others to fight an evil, we do feel more comfortable working with our own brethren. Does anyone know of such a group?

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Editorial Book Reviews

Essays in Apologetics, Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson; Apologetics Press, 5251 Millwood Rd., Montgomery, AL 36109-0900; 192 pages, paper $4.00.

Two men who have made a terrific impact in the field of apologetics have joined their efforts to produce this book. While occasionally there is an interchange, Thompson usually writes in the field pertaining to and answering the theory of evolution; Jackson's essays are usually in the field of Biblical criticism, responding to the approach of liberalism and dealing with Biblical difficulties. While both deal with scientific topics, neither is difficult to read. The essays are also relatively short, giving them more popular appeal. But this does not prevent the book from bristling with information we all need to help us meet the challenge of living in a modern world that has largely rejected God, His creative power and His divinely revealed will. The essays are a collection of all the articles each author had in their monthly publication, called **Reason and Revelation,** for the years 1981 and 1982. Companion volumes are planned every two years. And we predict that when you read this one you will eagerly await future volumes.

Hermeneutical Agnosticism, Jody L. Apple; New Testament Christian Press, Media, PA 19063; 192 pages, paper $7.95.

Subtitled "A Critique of Subjectivism in Biblical Interpretation," this book is an attempt to prove by logic that the Bible is the objective word of God, that it communicates His will to man, that it can be understood, and that when it is understood, one has absolute knowledge of God's will for his life. Since the book is basically the author's Master's thesis, the reading (and the logic) becomes a little wearisome at times, but the principles discussed are so vital that one is amply rewarded for wading through it. Like his teacher (Thomas B. Warren) he uses a good deal of symbolic logic, but he breaks the symbols down into readable language for those unacquainted with this method of reasoning. And while he admits that there is room in the church to differ on some subjects (his method cannot lead to agreement on every subject even among those he considers sound and who use the same kind of logic as he does), we think he becomes too eager and shoots from the hip by accusing others (with whom he differs on similar subjects) of believing in and practicing hermeneutical agnosticism. Quite frankly, in our years of being before the public on the printed page, we have differed with many good men on many different subjects, and we differ with everyone on some things, but we have never to our knowledge differed with anyone in the church who did not believe that truth could be learned from the word of God. The author defines a hermeneutical agnostic as one who believes that we cannot know the truth. He then brands some as hermeneutical agnostics who just differ with him (but we most certainly believe that the truth can be learned). It appears to us that he jumps the tract here (his logic becomes illogic); if not, then he is saying that we are all hermeneutical agnostics to some degree, but his degree is acceptable while the degree of others is not. But this aspect of the book need not keep us from a profitable reading of it.

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Clayton Pepper, Editor

Carolina Church News

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports directly to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. All correspondents should note that the Rock Hill post office box has been discontinued. Items for publication must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Williamston. The Southside Church is urgently in need of financial assistance. Frank Hedgecoe is working there. Contact Shelton Winn, (919) 792-7284.

Fayetteville. Helen Street has scheduled their 13th annual youth rally for October 25-27.

Raleigh. Dates for the Singles Retreat sponsored by Brooks Avenue Church of Christ are October 11-13.

Burlington. On June 16 services were begun at the Alamance County Prison Unit. Two additional deacons have been appointed at Mebane Street.

Charlotte. Riley Dennis has been appointed as an additional elder at Providence Road.

Jim Davis Reporting:

Henderson. Jim and Nancy Davis are now working full time with the Henderson

1985 NORTH CAROLINA LECTURESHIP
"God-Centered Minds"

Date:	September 10-12, 1985 (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)
Place:	Friendly Avenue Church of Christ 5101 W. Friendly Avenue Greensboro, NC 27410
Time:	9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. — Day session 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. — Evening session
Activities:	Lectures and Classes daily Open Forum daily Lunch provided by Friendly Avenue congregation Dinner — On your own
Keynote Speakers: (p.m.)	Tuesday — Dan Blazer Wednesday — Bob Rigdon Thursday — Al Bergeron
Lecturers/Speakers/ Teachers: (Daily)	North Carolina Ministers (Program to be announced)
Daily Themes:	Tuesday — God-Centered Minds / Self Wednesday — God-Centered Minds / Church Thursday — God-Centered Minds / The Lost

Your support is needed — all N.C. ministers will be contacted shortly to determine your participation in the Lectureship.

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Manager, Dennis Conner

Church. Jim is a recent graduate of the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions. They have been with the Henderson Congregation since Jim's graduation last November. Thus far one has been baptized and one family restored.

NC Conversions

Helen Street, Fayetteville, 2; W. Jefferson, 1; Bell Fork, Jacksonville, 10; Brooks Avenue, Raleigh, 8; S. Fork, Winston-Salem, 3; Kernersville, 2; Pine Valley, Wilmington, 1; Providence Road, Charlotte, 1. Total: 28.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Spartanburg. The Fairview congregation and the Gaffney congregation at West Buford at Brown Street are working and planning for a campaign for Christ in Gaffney. The goal is to knock on every door in Gaffney. A three-day meeting with brother Bill Griffin will be conducted with the campaign July 25, 26 and 27 at 7:30 p.m. Anyone wishing to assist in knocking on doors should contact the Fairview Church of Christ, P.O. Box 671, Spartanburg, SC 29304.

Union. Carter Geer will preach in a gospel meeting July 14-19, while home from Africa.

Rock Hill. The Preachers' Workshop for August 5 will review current arguments relative to the instrumental music question. Jeff Lovitt is moving to Boonville, Missouri, to work with the church there.

Columbia. A Youth Rally is planned for August 9-11 at Saint Andrews Road Church of Christ in Columbia. Brothers Jerry, Rudy, and David Senn will be the speakers.

SC Conversions

Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, 2; Duncan, 1; Summerville, 1; Fairview, Spartanburg, 6; Myrtle Beach, 1. Total: 11.

Salvation

John Waddey, Knoxville, TN

With a theme as important as salvation one would think that every intelligent person would be eager to know its meaning and ramifications. Sadly such is not the case. Few folks have more than a passing knowledge of the subject. Still fewer could discuss it from the Scriptures.

What is Salvation?

Salvation is deliverance from past sins. From that moment in adolescence when we became morally aware of and accountable for our deeds, we have been accumulating a debt of sin. Our sin alienates and separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2). It carries the penalty of death (Rom. 6:23). It burdens us with guilt and remorse (Rom. 7:22-24). In salvation, God washes away all our past sin and guilt when in faith we obey Him in baptism (Acts 22:16). Peter says when we repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus, we receive remission of sins (Acts 2:38). This means our sin debt is paid in full. Paul paints a vivid picture in Romans chapter 5: "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us . . . while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son. . . ." (5:8-10.) Having paid the price to secure our pardon, Jesus charged His disciple to "preach the gospel to the whole creation: so that he that believes and is baptized could be saved (Mark 16:15-16).

Salvation means deliverance from Satan's power. Everyone who has lived long enough knows the reality of Satan's power in our lives. In our foolishness we become willing servants to this evil, tyrannical master (Rom. 6:16). Realizing our miserable condition we try to save ourselves but to no avail. Like Paul, what we want to do we fail in and what we despise we often do. We too cry out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:22-24.) The apostle tells us how we are saved from Satan's evil dominion. It is through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 7:25). When we obey from the heart that form of doctrine (i.e. the gospel of Jesus), we are delivered and made free from sin (Rom. 6:17-18). Jesus became a man "that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is the devil: and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. 2:14-15.) When we are in Christ, God's Holy Spirit helps us to put to death the sinful deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13). He strengthens us with power in our inward man so we may be strong to overcome Satan's power (Eph. 3:16)

Salvation rescues us from God's wrath of judgment. "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Rom. 5:9.) Divine justice demands that sin be punished. The wages we have earned is death (Rom. 6:23), but "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8.) Since He bore the penalty due us, God can now **justify** us. That means that we are treated just as if we had never sinned! Rather than impose the penalties we deserved, God can forego our punishment because we are saved.

We are saved from this present evil world according to Paul (Gal. 1:3-4). Most folks overlook this aspect of salvation, but it is significant. Sinners may want to live on earth forever, but God's children anxiously look forward to a heavenly home (John 14:1-3). To depart and be with Christ is far better (Phil. 1:23). On earth there are continual trials and tribulations. Pain, suffering and sorrow are our common lot. In heaven all of these are done away (Rev. 21:3-4). It was a merciful act when God placed the cherubim with the flaming sword at the gate of Eden lest sin-cursed men eat of the tree of life and life forever in a world spoiled by sin (Gen. 3:22-24). Because we enjoy salvation in Christ we can pray. "come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

We are rescued from death by our Savior. Though it is the common fate of all men to experience physical death, Jesus will resurrect us from the grave. "The hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live . . . they that have done good unto the resurrection of life." (John 5:25-29.) Even though our natural bodies are buried in corruption and dishonor, they will be raised in glorious incorruption (1 Cor. 15:42-43). We will then be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord and shall ever be with him (1 Thess. 5:17-18).

Our salvation delivers us from the second death. "This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:14-15.) All who die in sin will spend their eternity in damnation (John 8:21). The saved will hear Christ say "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34.) Jesus promises those who have experienced the first resurrection that the second death will have no power over them (Rev. 20:6). The first resurrection is that symbolic one every saved person experienced when he died to sin, was buried with Christ in baptism and raised (resurrected) from the baptismal waters to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:1-5).

You can enjoy this blessed salvation **now.** Hear the apostle John: "These things have I written unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:13.) To preserve this blessing we must **walk** in the light of His word and the blood of Jesus will keep on cleansing us from all sin (such is the meaning of the original Greek text). If we do sin, we need only confess that and "he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:7-9.)

Salvation — what a thrilling thought. It is available to all men of every race (Mark 16:15-16). It is a free gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9). Its conditions are simple and easy (Acts 2:38). It will last you from now unto eternity (Heb. 5:8-9). Will you not claim this marvellous gift today?

* * *

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Family of the Year — The Jack Cooper family of Barnwell has been chosen Barnwell County Family of the Year. Cooper is minister of Barnwell Church of Christ and the family is active in religious, scouting, scholastic and civic activities. From left: Jonathan; wife, Gayle; Cooper; and Adam. Standing behind the Coopers is daughter, Loana. (Photo by Tri-City Studio.)

SERIOUS QUESTIONS

We have long believed and taught that Biblical faith is the belief of testimony — the testimony given in the Scriptures (Rom. 10:17; John 20:30-31) — and not necessarily the end product of a human form of logic (which supposedly results in absolute knowledge). This has caused some tension between us and some good brethren who tell us that we cannot have true faith in God and the Bible unless we can, by their process of reasoning, prove, to the point of absolute knowledge, that God is and that the Bible is true. This tension is caused, not because we question the validity of logic (one would be stupid to do that) but because we do not define faith as absolute knowledge. Those who differ with us make no fundamental difference in the two. We do. Faith is reasonable (the most reasonable thing in the world), but it is not the conclusion of a syllogism. And while one would deny his faith to question the existence of God or doubt that the Bible is His word (if he said he was unsure of God's existence or the truthfulness of the Bible), as we see it, faith is not the end product of a reasoning process. Faith is similar to if not identical with the convictions of a jury in a murder trial where there are eyewitnesses to the crime. The jury hears the testimony. Each one believes the witnesses. As a group, they find the alleged killer guilty. Did they reach their verdict by a logical process in which they proved beyond any possible doubt that he was the killer? Or was it the result of their belief of testimony? Did they have absolute knowledge that the accused was guilty? Or did the evidence just put it beyond a reasonable doubt? In a similar way our faith is the belief of testimony. The inspired witnesses tell us what they saw and heard. We believe their testimony. That belief of testimony is what the Bible calls faith. In this we deny neither the place nor the validity of reason (not even the logical process of reasoning). Logic can be extremely useful in strengthening faith (or rather showing its reasonableness) by showing that the testimony is reliable, but it is the testimony, not the logic, that produces it.

It seems strange to us that some would seek to bind a process of reasoning on us that differs from that taught in the word of God. To see the force of this, let us raise some very serious questions: The Bible binds (commands or demands) faith in God, but where does it, in any shape or form, set out a logical formula to prove the existence of God? If a logical process is mandatory to Scriptural faith, why do the Scriptures themselves not utilize such a process? God expects everyone on earth to believe His word, but where has He set out a logical formula (a syllogism) to prove that the Bible is the word of God? (Of course this is proven by the Bible itself, but our point is that it nowhere uses a syllogism to prove itself.) This brings us to our concluding question, namely, when one binds a system of proof that is different from that system used by God Himself in order to

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make faith valid, is he not guilty of making a human rule the basis of faith rather than the divine word of God? Indeed, he is. And that makes this a very serious matter, one worthy of very serious study.

THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection! What a glorious thought! What a blessed hope! What a thrill it should send through the hearts and minds of all those who have seen the chilly hands of death laid upon a loved one! What a comfort it offers to us when we stand by the grave of one we have loved but lost! What a joy to those who love life but know that they are daily marching into the hands of death! What an assurance it is to know that our own resurrection is as certain as His who died that we might live! "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." (2 Cor. 4:14.)

The importance of this subject can be seen by the fact that Paul devotes the whole 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians to the resurrection, both the resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection of all men. He does so, not because the Corinthians had raised questions concerning it (as they had a number of other subjects), but because some among them were saying there was no resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12). Just who they were who were teaching this, whether Greek philosophers or Jewish Sadducees, we are not informed. But it seems to us that the doctrine of no resurrection was originating outside the congregation (cf. 1 Cor. 15:29), and perhaps outside of Christianity, but it had influenced some in the church and undoubtedly it had an appeal (as most false doctrines do) to many so that the church was in danger of being led astray on this fundamental matter. The resurrection of Christ, as is known by all who understand the good news, is the heart of the gospel message and is therefore the hope of the world — the only hope that death does not end all. But there is much more to it than this: since the resurrection of Christ is the heart of the gospel, if He is not risen, there is no power in the gospel to save. But if the gospel is powerless to save, then all is lost for the cause of Christ — our faith is vain and we are yet in our sins (1 Cor. 15:12-19). But even further, if Christ is not risen, then there is no general resurrection — we are all doomed to an eternal grave. Since the resurrection of Christ is central to the gospel message (it is what gives it its power to save), to deny His resurrection is to deny the gospel, and to deny the gospel is to return to a state of hopelessness. Thus without the resurrection life is meaningless, hope is hopeless, and death is the final goal.

But thank God! Christ is risen (1 Cor. 15:20). And by His resurrection Christ is proven to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4), the gospel is true (and the power of God to save), salvation is a fact, death has lost its sting (1 Cor. 15:54-57), and we can live in the full assurance that we shall live again. Every grave must give up its dead (cf. John 5:28-29; 1 Thess. 5:16; Rev. 20:11-15). The beautiful and vital message of the resurrection of Christ from the dead is the beautiful and vital message that assures our own.

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An Ongoing Process

Frequently we hear (or read) the expression, "The restoration of New Testament Christianity is an ongoing process, never a finished task." Quite frankly, we do not like this expression. It suggests to our minds the concept that we can never be sure that we have learned the fundamentals of the faith, that we must constantly be restudying every subject, and that the great truths we have learned (by years of study and refinement) may turn out not to be truth at all. Every fiber of our faith recoils from such a concept. But like it or not, it is still true that restoration is never absolutely finished. It must continue as a constant process or cease to be a restoration movement. Of course this is not true in every sense one might attach to the expression (truth is truth and it can never be changed, regardless of how much it is studied or restudied), but it is true in at least two aspects:

1. Restoration is ongoing in the sense that every generation, actually every person, must study the Scriptures for itself and make the divine truths discovered therein a part of his own personal faith and practice. There is, of course, the obligation of one generation to teach the next (e.g., parents are to teach their children), but regardless of how well one is taught objective truth there comes a time when each one must subjectively receive or reject it for himself — he must determine for himself whether he will follow Jesus as Lord or become the ruler of his own life. The religion of Christ is of such nature, is such a personal matter, that it cannot be passed from one generation to another. Each generation must accept it for itself. Nor can one person force faith upon another (as mucy as some preachers and editors would like to do so). One is not true to the faith simply because he believes certain doctrinal formulas and follows them with some degree of regularity; he is true only when from his own personal convictions (from his own heart) he has made a total commitment to Christ as Lord and does what he does because he is following Him. To know the truth in this manner, to make such a commitment to Christ, one must be convinced from his own study, from his own conclusions, whether it be from the oral teaching of another or from a private study of the word, that Jesus is Lord, that the Bible is His word, that the church is His people, and that the Christian life is His way. One does not follow the Lord merely by doing (or believing) certain things; rather his belief in and commitment to Christ results in doing certain things. The Scriptures sum this point up by saying, "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." (Heb. 8:11.) In this sense, the restoration cannot be handed down from one person to another. Each must achieve it for himself.

2. But perhaps more important, the restoration is an ongoing process in the application of its fundamental truths to the needs and problems of each generation and to the rapid changing circumstances each generation must face. All of us have learned that about the time one "issue" dies out (after a long battle and sometimes division) another one begins to surface. Most of us wish this did not have to be. But be it must because the restoration is an ongoing process in the application of truth to new and different circumstances. The fact is, we have not yet learned how to apply divine truth to all the situations which confronted us yesterday and today and we know from experience that tomorrow will thrust new and different ones upon us. While the truth remains the same, now and forever, the application of that truth to a fast changing world must be a constant process. Our brotherhood now locked in tension as to how to apply the truth on the subject of unity in a religious atmosphere where all (or nearly so) are seeking unity but on many different basis. This is especially true as it

relates to the conservative Christian church, heirs together with us of the restoration ideals. Unity is an essential part of our task, but how to achieve it under changing circumstance is an ongoing process (of course it must be achieved on the basis of truth, this we all admit, but that truth must be correctly applied to a situation which may never have existed before; and it is that correct application we must seek in all new circumstances).

Another illustration of the application of truth in new and changing circumstances is that of abortion. From the time the New Testament was written most countries of the world have had laws protecting the unborn. Under these laws to abort meant taking innocent human life. All we had to do was to show that abortion violated civil laws, laws which all were commanded to keep. That settled the issue. Abortion was wrong, then, on two counts: (1) it was the taking of human life; (2) it violated the laws of the land. But that was changed in this country by a growing concept (it is questionable as to whether anyone really believes it or not) that the unborn is not human and consequently abortion is not the taking of human life. This concept led to the Supreme Court's decision which says in essence that since the unborn are not human they are therefore not entitled to the protection of law. When this occurred, we were confronted with a brand new situation and the grand old truth (that of violation of the law) formerly used to oppose abortion was no longer pertinent. We were forced to take a different approach and to apply new truths (old truths but applied to a new situation) to an old subject. In opposing abortion now we must show that the Scriptures recognize the unborn as human (and thus possessed of human life) and that it violates the law of God (regardless of what the law of the land says) to shed innocent blood. We are still going back to the Bible for the solution (still seeking to restore the ancient order of things), but we are applying different truths to the new situation. Undoubtedly in the future we will be faced with additional changes which may require us to seek other Bible truth to apply to this subject.

Thus to say that the restoration of New Testament Christianity is an ongoing process is not to say that we cannot know the truth or that the truth we know may someday be changed (or prove not to be the truth at all). It is to say, however, that each person must learn (and practice) the truth for himself and that we must constantly be applying the truth to new problems, situations, and circumstances. As uncomfortable as this may be, it means that we will never live in an "issue"-free period or a time when there will be no tension among us, that matters will be so settled that we will never again have to change our approach or apply new truths (actually old truths but applied to a new situation) to new problems, situations, and circumstances. As with abortion, an issue may not be permanently settled with the same truths. The ongoing process simply says that we will continue to search for and correctly apply the truth in each case. When the situation so changes as to make the current application of truth obsolete (as illustrated above in abortion) we will search for the truth which will currently apply. This is the nature, the very heart, of the restoration plea.

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Clarifying the Difficulties Arising From Alleged Contradictions

(Part 1)

James L. Meadows, Memphis, TN

Note: The material in this series of articles was first prepared and presented at the Fort Worth Lectures in 1981 and 1982. The 1981 lectures were Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained and the 1982 lectures were Difficult Texts of the Old Testament explained. They are used here by permission of Wendell Winkler, editor and publisher of the books.

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Conclusion

Introduction

Infidels and atheists have attempted ever since the Bible was written, to disprove its histories, impugn its motives, and misrepresent its morals. Skeptics and unbelievers often make the following argument against the Bible: "The Bible is filled with errors, obvious myths and self-contradictions. This proves that it is not a book written by divine guidance, but by fallible men. Therefore the Bible must simply be viewed as an ancient book which, although containing wise sayings and valuable illustrations of certain moral principles, should not be exalted to the status of a divine production."

It is not to be denied that some passages, when compared with corresponding passages, do appear at first sight to be contradictory. But the fact that two statements may be difficult to reconcile is no proof that they are contradictory statements. It shall be the purpose of this lesson to define contradictions, show some of the sources of contradictions, explain reasons for the differences, discuss some things that must be established before a valid contradiction can be charged, and give as many examples as time and space will permit.

I. Definitions and Laws

In order to get our subject clearly before us we need to define our terms: contradiction, contradictory, difficult, discrepancy, alleged. (1) **Contradiction** means "a statement or proposition that contradicts or denies another or itself and is logically incongruous." (2) **Contradictory** means "In logic: a proposition so related to a second that it is impossible for both to be true." (3) **Difficult** means "hard to do, make, or carry out . . . hard to deal with, manage or overcome . . . hard to understand" (Webster). (4) **Discrepancy** means "the state or quality of being discrepant, differing, disagreeing, discordant, inconsistent." (5) **Alleged** means that something is asserted to be true or to exist. It is asserted that contradictions definitely exist in the Bible.

One of the ramifications of the Law of Contradiction is the concept that "nothing can have at the same time and at the same place contradictory and inconsistent qualities." "A door may be open or shut, but the same door may not be open and shut at the same time. Open and shut are opposites, yet they are not contradictory unless they are affirmed of the same object at the same time. Here is the principle: opposites are not necessarily contradictory."

The Law of Contradiction also implies that a proposition cannot, with reference to the same matter, be both true and false. To say that Jane Smith is a wife, and then assert that Jane Smith is not a wife is a contradiction. But to say that Jane Smith is a wife, and then add that she is a mother, does not constitute a contradiction. The two terms, although different, supplement each other, but do not contradict each other. "It is sometimes possible, by means of close study, to show without forcing the issue that two supposedly contradictory passages are really complementary."

It must be absolutely impossible to harmonize two statements before we conclude that they are contradictory. "It is the first principle of historical science that any solution which affords a possible method of harmonizing any two statements is preferable to the assumption of inaccuracy or error — whether these statements are found in the same or different writers. To act on any other basis, it is clearly acknowledged, is to assume, not prove, error." **Two statements are not contradictory unless it is impossible for both to be true.** ". . . that if, on any rational hypothesis, they both can be supposed true, they both **may** be true, and no contradiction is made out. This rule is made necessary by the fact that writers and speakers often omit details, the absence of which gives their statements the appearance of inconsistency, whereas their presence in the narrative would have prevented this appearance. It is unjust to refuse any writers the benefit of this rule; for in doing so we are liable to charge with falsehood the most truthful writers, and with incorrect information those best informed." **The absence of a solution to so-called contradictions does not constitute evidence that there is no solution.** It is possible that many of us may be unable to solve many of the difficulties which have been pointed out by infidels as contradictions, while others who have delved more deeply into the Scriptures have little trouble solving the difficulty.

II. Design of the Supposed Contradictions

Whately, as quoted by Haley, wrote: "The seeming contradictions in scripture are too numerous not to be the result of design; and doubtless **were** designed, not as mere difficulties to try our faith and patience, but as furnishing the most suitable mode of instruction that could have been devised, by mutually explaining and modifying or limiting or extending one another's meaning." What purposes are served by the supposed contradictions?

(1) **They become "strong incidental proof that there was no collusion among the sacred writers."** David Hartley, in 1749, said, "No single forger, or combination of forgers, would have suffered the apparent inconsistencies which occur in a few places, such as the different genealogies of Christ . . . and some little variations in the narration of the same fact in different Gospels. These are too obvious at first sight, not to have been prevented, had there been any fraud."

(2) **They stimulate the human intellect.** Difficulties often arouse men to diligent ef-

forts to find the solutions. Bible difficulties "have stimulated infidels to write more books about the Bible than have been written criticizing any other book; and believers have been stimulated to study more than they would have studied to answer infidel criticisms." (Roy Lanier, Sr.)

(3) **They test the moral character of individuals.** Jesus often spoke in parables to test the moral character and sincerity of his hearers (Matt. 13:1-15; Mark 4:11-13). He knew that those with honest hearts would exert the necessary effort to learn the truth, but those superficial and insincere characters would reject it. So today those who "love the truth" will search diligently for the solution to all the difficulties, but those that "love not the truth" will be sent a "strong delusion" (2 Thess. 2:10-12), and will feel justified, because of the difficulties and seeming contradictions, in rejecting God's message.

"My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

Than my precious Jesus' blood and His righteousness. If only I were disciplined enough to think of Him every waking moment and dream of Him at night. What else could one meditate upon and find so much eternal benefit (Col. 2:2-3)? But my heart is hard, my memory easily dimmed.

But there is one place where my heart is put squarely at the cross and I **must** remember — and rejoice. Is it not glorious that the Holy Spirit has ordained and faithful men observe the Lord's Supper every week, upon the first day (Acts 20:7; 2 Thess. 2:15)? It truly renews the spirit weary with burdens of the world, loads laden by Satan which offered relief but were not.

The Supper properly eaten forces the vision upon Calvary, a vision of love where once more Christ is openly portrayed as crucified (Gal. 3:1). We celebrate that holy Death-For-Us on His glorious resurrection day! And we get to share the sacred Memory every week (Mark 16:9; Acts 2:42).

How terrible if it were eaten only once a year — for surely I would grow cold by sin, my mind too clouded by then to see the practical significance of all that it means for me. How cruel and worthless to eat it every day. For what would the joy of death be without the resurrection which the first day so plainly implies? And why should I choose to remember my Savior in this ordained manner only at the whim of a few who would say, "Quarterly, or, monthly, participate in the memorial feast"? Certainly the feast means more than a change of the seasons or a phase of the moon.

Let this feast be my precious reunion dinner with my heavenly Father and His blessed children around one table (Matt. 26:29; 1 Cor. 10:17). Let no man interfere. For in that body and blood I see One living who was killed for me. And once more I can go out and fight the devil and his legions in the Name. I have heard the promise again, and it refreshes me: "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death **till he comes.**" (1 Cor. 11:26.)

* * *

Building a Better Congregation

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

The success of a congregation does not depend upon a certain personality, preacher, or program. The success of any congregation depends entirely upon the success of its individual members. It has always been that way and it will always be that way. But what does the success of each person (and therefore the congregation) depend upon? Let me suggest three things.

1. The success of a congregation depends upon each person's estimation of Jesus Christ. Nearly two milleniums after it was first posed, "Who do you say that I am?" still remains the most profound question confronting mankind. A.M. Fairbairn has summed up the penetrating nature of the question of Christ this way: "The greatest problems in the field of history center in the person and life of Christ. Who He was, what He was, how and why He came to be it are questions that have not lost and will not lose their interest for us and for mankind. . . . He is, whatever else He may be, a world's imperishable wonder, a world's everlasting problem, a pre-eminent object of human faith, a pre-eminent subject of human thought." Our response with lips and life to the question of Christ will lay either the cornerstone for our conquering or the foundation for our failure.

2. The success of a congregation depends upon each person's estimation of their fellow Christians. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35.) Consider the consequences — certain failure if this formula is not followed and certain success if it is. Brothers and sisters, how's your love life?

3. The success of a congregation depends upon each person's estimation of the lost. How important were the lost to Jesus? More important than His life (Matt. 20:28). How important were the lost to Paul? More important than his soul (Rom. 9:14). How important are they to us? Will we stand by on the sidelines and watch as our friends, family, and loved ones march off to a devil's hell or will we take up the sword of God and fight for their souls?

"Those who sow in tears,
Will reap with songs of joy.
He who goes out weeping carrying seed
to sow,
Will return with songs of joy carrying
sheaves with him."
(Psalm 126:5-6, NIV.)

Do not miss the message. The next time you are wondering why the congregation is not the way it should be, do not start in the second or third person — start with yourself and your relationship to Christ, Christians, and the lost. Remember, a better congregation begins with you!

That Which Fills the Heart

Jeff Lovitt, Rock Hill, SC

It is evident that we are experiencing a crisis of commitment in the church. We also face a crisis of commitment in the world as is evidenced in the apparent lack of interest many have in religion.

The fact that a problem of tremendous proportions exists is impossible to deny. However, it is this writer's conviction that our diagnosis is off-base. Whereas the general conclusion has been that people do not want to commit their lives, this writer's conviction is that, rather than a lack of commitment, people displace commitment that is meant for God. Their commitment is there in full, but it is placed on other things, other people, other ideas, or other systems.

Jesus said, "The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil." (Matt. 12:34,35; cf. Matt. 6:21.) Notice in both cases that the treasure box is overflowing. It is a **filled** heart. God has so composed us that as a treasure box, or a vessel (2 Cor. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:19-21), we must be filled up. And what fills us is that to which we are committed. There is no part of us that is void of commitment. But if we are wholly committed to the good thing, there is no room in our treasure box for commitment to the evil thing, and **vice versa.**

We may choose to be filled up with God (Eph. 3:19), or filled up with Satan (Acts 5:3). We may choose to be filled with God's riches (Prov. 8:20-21; Eph. 1:3-8), or long to fill our stomachs with the empty fruit of sin (Luke 15:16; 1 Thess. 2:16; Rom. 1:29). We can choose to be filled with joy and peace (2 Tim. 1:4; Rom. 15:13), or filled with jealousy and suspicion (Acts 13:45). But whatever direction is chosen, commitment to that direction in life is made.

The question we should ask ourselves is not "Will I commit myself?" but "To what or to whom **am** I committed?"[1] This question needs to be posed to every member of the church as well as to every non-Christian. We, like Isaac, need to re-dig the wells of godly commitment that have filled up with earthly cares (Gen. 26:15-18; cf. Mark 4:19)!

This battle for commitment begins with the mind. False thinking produces false commitment (2 Cor. 10:3-5). Whatever is poured into the cup is poured out of it as well. That is why the only way to successfully produce a genuine commitment to God flowing out of our lives is to let only that which is good fill our hearts (Matt. 12:34b-35). "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything is worthy of praise, **let your mind dwell on these things.**" (Phil. 4:8.)

Our task is to call men away from false commitment to substitute saviors, to call Christians away from dual commitment (Matt. 6:24; James 3:10-12) that divides and destroys, and to urge all to that single purpose (Phil. 3:13) of filling our lives with the word of God (Col. 3:16) and committing our energies to Him.

[1] Commmitment to a person other than Christ is aptly illustrated by the country and western song, "Can I Lean on You, Leona?" in which the singer describes his lover as his "sanctuary," his "rock for (of) ages," and his "shelter from the storm." Other people and other things cannot serve as substitute saviors, for they have no power to save eternally (Heb. 7:25).

Learning to Live

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

The letter of James is an awfully impressive one. It teaches us many principles of the Christian life for many circumstances and situations we may find in our lives. It teaches us how to live effectively and properly.

To learn its lessons for living, let us note three thoughts that are at the heart of its teachings. First, it exalts God's holy law. No other standard is expected, accepted, or presented. We are not to be led astray by the world that rationalizes its sinfulness. Second, it oppresses moral permissiveness. People are mean, ugly, and hurtful if they live without discipline. The daily news sadly reminds us that we cannot do as we please without the pain and trouble of sin. It also reminds us that there must be a universal and absolute right and wrong if the world's condition is to get better, and that standard must be followed. Third, it upholds that life is meaningless without adherence. James offers us a challenge to live and be faithful. Christianity is a way of life. The Christian's life is empty if it is not expressing life; it is not satisfying (Gal. 2:20; 6:14). So absorb His truth to give vitality to your Christian experience.

These give to us three observations to be made as we would learn from James how to live. First, many accuse James of being too harsh. He is blunt. But the Christian life is a most demanding life or it would not be the excellent life, a life of a much higher quality of living than what the world has to offer. The Christian must believe that his life is better for being so. Second, the Christian is not a clown and Christianity is not a circus and we do not live in a playground. Our lives in Christ demand the conversion, duty, responsibility, and action of conviction. Third, James is blunt because the excellency of the Christian life-style makes it superior to anything else man has ever known. James writes out of a deep and divine love for the Lord's brethren. Perhaps he is teaching us to rise above the mediocrity and sinfulness of half-hearted Christianity to the glory of God in heaven. Will we follow?

A final note. The seeds for these thoughts and the desire to study this powerful letter of God's Book were planted in me in Carolina Bible Camp last year. I have been watering and nurturing those seeds for a year now and it has rekindled the fires of love, conviction, and obedience that are given to my Lord Jesus Christ every day of my life. Carolina Bible Camp is indeed an excellent way for young minds (and older ones, too) to nurture their spiritual development. Its value to one's soul far outweighs the time, work, and expense invested in it. Pray for it, support it as God has made you able to, and participate in it as a worker or camper.

The True Wise Man

John D. White, Sr., Union, SC

This writer has remembered a favorite saying of one of his instructors. This saying goes, "Nothing is original unless you have forgotten where you got it."

That wise man, King Solomon, stated this principle a little differently in Ecclesiastes 1:9. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."

A truly wise person will gain knowledge and/or wisdom from the wise and the prudent. The apostle Paul, wise and inspired, encouraged Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.)

One of the wisest men to have ever lived on this earth was King Solomon. He sought wisdom from God: "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" (2 Chron. 1:10.)

We, today, are blessed in that Solomon was a prolific writer. Among his vast storehouse of writings was 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32). The wisdom which we can gain from these writings is limitless. Remember, wisdom also is not new; it's been here for a long time. "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels." (Prov. 1:5.)

Consider these suggestions for gaining knowledge and wisdom:

1. **True knowledge begins with a knowledge of God.** Mankind has failed miserably in his quest for answers. Godless philosophers from the teachings of Kant, Karl Marx, Neitzsche and Darwin have left our world in an almost total shambles. Their philosophies have produced horrifying world wars and a moral plague called communism or atheism. Think of this principle in relation to your life. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Prov. 1:7.)

2. **True knowledge continues to build through the teachings of godly parents.** It would be rather silly to think that a newborn babe could fend for itself, physically. Then why believe that the same could fend for itself morally? Godly parents will give proper guidelines and rules for their children. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." (Prov. 1:8.)

3. **True knowledge and wisdom build as children apply those godly instructions learned from their parents.** As we realize that Christian virtues are practical and that God's laws assist us in becoming wise and honorable in life's pursuits, wisdom is becoming an integral part of us. "For they [parental instructions] shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck." (Prov. 1:9.)

Who is the true wise man? It's not necessarily the one who has authored many works, or necessarily the one who has traveled extensively; rather, it is the one who has learned to respect God and His ways. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccl. 12:13.)

Let us become wise, as was Solomon, who finally understood what the truly wise man is all about.

Finding the Way of Escape

C.W. Bradley, Memphis, TN

Becoming a Christian brings many wonderful blessings, but it does not take away temptations. I do not need to offer proof of this for we already know that it is true. It is not a sin to be tempted. I used to think that I sinned every time I was tempted. Christ "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4;15.) We sin only when we yield to temptation. Actually temptations can prove a blessing if we will seek and find that "way of escape" which God provides for us (1 Cor. 10:13). But perhaps all of us cry out for help as we struggle to find that way of escape. The following thoughts may serve to help us:

1. **Remember that God always sees us.** There is no place to go to escape His vision. The Psalmist declared, "The darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." (Ps. 139:12.) Truly, "There's an all-seeing eye watching you."

2. **Fill our hearts with the word of God.** Remember Jesus overcame Satan's temptations in the wilderness with "it is written" (Matt. 4:1-11). Truly God's word is "living and powerful" (Heb. 4:12), and David said, "Thy word have I hidden in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11).

3. **Talk to God daily.** "When you met with great temptation, did you think to pray?" We need to remember that "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their supplication" (1 Pet. 3:12).

4. **Realize that God is depending upon us.** Christians are "The light of the world" and "The salt of the earth." Someone is looking at you and your conduct will have an influence upon him. It may be a friend or it may even be your children. Do not disappoint them. What if we fail them?

5. **Remember that a day of judgment is coming.** We must all stand before God and give an account of our lives. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:12.) On that day all will be brought to light.

May we all learn to overcome temptations, but when we fail, let us remember that God will forgive if we will repent and pray.

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Clayton Pepper, Editor

Don't Try to Make a Full Plan for Your Life

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

"But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matt. 10:19-20.)

These words were addressed to the disciples who were with Jesus at the time. They were evidently meant to teach that under the conditions described by Jesus those disciples would be miraculously told what to say. If that be the case they could not have direct application to us today. There is, however, a secondary sense in which the words may apply to us; for the Bible clearly teaches that God providentially watches over His people, and that if any of them lack wisdom they are to make their request for it known to God with the assurance that their request will be granted. No human being can make a full plan for his life. He must trust in God to do for him that which he cannot do for himself.

What is meant by an unplanned life? It is not a bland confidence that somehow things will always come out right in the end. God expects His people to do what they can in meeting the problems of life; but He does not expect them to anticipate the future to the extent that their lives will be filled with distracting care. Jesus said, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?" (Matt. 6:25.) The unplanned life has to do with those situations which may come to any of us, situations which we cannot foresee, and for which we cannot make adequate preparation. Advanced planning will, more often than not, fail us for the simple reason that we cannot fully anticipate or accurately foresee the event. For example, there may come to us: (1) Sudden temptations which we would have never thought possible, and for which we have no provisions; (2) pains, sorrows, and disappointments which we can never feel in advance, even though we may often vaguely concede them as human possibilities; (3) unexpected opportunities, open doors which we had never for a moment thought of and concerning which an immediate decision must be made. It is, then, in these areas and at this deeper level that we are compelled to admit that there is such a thing as an unplanned life. Confronted with such an occasion, one cannot take the time off to make a diligent search of the Scriptures for guidance. Faced with the necessity of instant choice, the best that one can do is to rely on the Bible information he already has and his history as a Christian.

God's providential guidance. There is nothing more clearly taught in the Bible than the providential care of God for His people (Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:6-7; Heb. 13:5). The Scriptural teaching regarding this providential care is often overlooked because some people, it seems, cannot conceive of it apart from miracles. However, if we would keep clearly before us the manner in which the Bible describes the works of God, it would be much easier for us to understand. For convenience's sake, let us observe that the works of God may be arranged under three headings — (1) **miraculous;** (2) **natural;** (3) **providential. A miracle** is an act of God which does not depend upon any law except His own sovereign will. **A work of nature** is an effect produced without a special act of God's will, being simply the result of natural laws. **The work of providence** is an effect produced by a special act of God's will through the use of natural means. Human beings, situated as we are, may be reached by our heavenly Father in matters which are beyond our ability to plan for through His providential care in our behalf (Heb. 4:16; Matt. 10:29-31).

I know not where his islands lift
  Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
  Beyond his love and care.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
  Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
  My human heart on Thee!

— John Greenleaf Whittier

Carolina Church News

NEWS BRIEF

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. All correspondents should note that the Rock Hill Post Office Box has been discontinued. Items for publication must be received by the next-to-the last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Kernersville. The Linville Forest church will host an "I Can" seminar for youth on August 24-25. Speakers are Tim Gillespie, James Kisner, Brian Knoerl, Kirk Sams and Al Sprinkle.

Thomasville. According to the Raleigh bulletin, the Thomasville congregation has completed payment on their building site. The dozen or so members raised $25,000 in 16 months. Scott Hurston is the preacher.

Raleigh. The Brooks Avenue elders recently commended the members there for contributing over $50,000 since December for special causes.

Charlotte. Archdale has announced plans to run a series of ads in the Charlotte Observer. This paper goes to 120,000 homes in the Charlotte area.

Advance. The correct mailing address for the Redland church is Route 4, Box 62-B, Advance, NC 27006.

Wilkesboro. The correct telephone number for the church is 919-838-5695.

NC Conversions:

Providence Rd., Charlotte, 2; Hendersonville 1; Roanoke Rapids 1; Pine Valley, Wilmington, 1; Kernesville 2; Advance 4; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 1. Total: 12.

SOUTH CAROLINA.

West Columbia. The bulletin reported a recent visit by James and Eva Johnson. These are the parents of Dennis Johnson, former preacher at West Columbia and presently in mission work in India. The James Johnsons have spent the past twenty years working in India.

Rock Hill. Churches who know of students planning to attend Winthrop College this fall are asked to inform the Charlotte Avenue church in Rock Hill. (Actually, it would be good to inform nearby congregations of students going to any campus away from their homes).

SC Conversions:

Summerville 4; Lexington 1; Fairview, Spartanburg, 2; N. Charleston 1; Essex Village, Charleston, 5; Northeast, Greenville, 1; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill, 3; S. Pickney, Union, 7. Total: 24.

* * *

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About Unfaithfulness

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

The purpose of this article is to issue a challenge. Many are ready to discipline those who are not faithful by neglecting the Bible study and worship services each week. But we are challenged to examine ourselves (1 Cor. 13:5). The Bible is our standard. Does it not teach us that we can be on the pews three days a week, even more, and still be unfaithful?

What is unfaithfulness?

Unfaithfulness is the unwillingness to obey God. Disobedience violates principles that are at the very heart of the Christian life. If we are unwilling to obey God, we are unwilling to live the Christian life.

Unfaithfulness violates the principles of love (John 14:15). Love humbles us to surrender to the one we love. If we love God, then we are not self-willed or self-centered toward Him. We will give our lives to God to live for Him for His is primary object of our affections (Matt. 22:37).

Unfaithfulness violates the principle of faith (James 2:17). Faith in God is conviction of God and His word. Faith humbles us to seek His standard of thinking and conduct. Conviction is a useless thing without obedience for it has no effort on our character and our lives. We are humbled to turn to God for we recognize that man cannot find his way in himself (Jer. 10:23).

Unfaithfulness violates the principle of judgment (Matt. 7:15-27). Judgment humbles us for we will stand before God without excuse to hide behind. We are actually what we do regardless of what we want others to think. Our practice tells on us (verses 15-20). We will face the consequences of how we live, what we do. Judgment is harsh for the unfaithful perhaps to teach us the severity of the disobedient life (verses 21-23). The faithful are wise for they are preparing for judgment in their obedience. The unfaithful are foolish for their disobedience leaves them unprepared and open for the harsh and terrible punishment that awaits them (verses 24-27).

Finally, unfaithfulness violates the principle of salvation (Heb. 5:9). God will save, by His grace, only those who have the love, conviction, the willingness, to obey Him. God will not save anyone in their sins.

Who is unfaithful?

We are unfaithful, then when we do not conduct ourselves in a right way, when Christians do not live like Christians. We are unfaithful when we are: lax in attendance of the services (Heb. 10:24-25), not participating in the work of the Lord's church that the Lord has charged us to do (Eph. 3:10; Acts 2:41-47), in the assembly on Sunday but during the week we are lying, stealing, full of greed, hateful, immoral, prejudice, impure and unclean (Col. 3:5-11), children who disobey their parents (Eph. 6:1), parents who will not be an example to and teach their children the ways of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). The list can be added to, but perhaps this gives us an idea of what unfaithfulness is all about.

So we best beware of excuses (Heb. 10:26-27). Reasons for not obeying can become excuses for an unfaithful practice and no excuse will be accepted when we stand before the God of heaven! There is no forgiveness (salvation) for us when our hearts are full of excuses. It is only for us when our heart is full of grief and penitence of our sin. Why? Because all excuses are condemned with the unfaithful, or sinful, practice.

Conclusion

Let us make a serious effort to obey God, make a serious effort to live by God's word as it commands and teaches. When we are living by obedience, we are not doing what is sin. So all disobedience is sin, and sin is unfaithfulness (1 John 3:4). God's great concern for our lives in that we obey him (1 Sam. 15:22). Saul lost God's approval because of his disobedience. Where do we stand? Let us be faithful.

Education That Is "Christian"

John Waddy, Knoxville, TN

The great challenge that confronts Christian parents is to raise and educate their children without the corrupting influence of Secular Humanism. Even our Christian schools must be concerned with Humanism. If we have Christian teachers trained in secular schools, they could hardly help having absorbed a humanistic tint to their training. If we use the textbooks prepared by the secular publishing industry for the public school system, these books will be saturated with humanist philosophy and interpretation of life. If we structure our school curriculums to gain the approval of state accrediting bodies, they will be expecting a humanistic approach to our education.

Our "Christian schools" must offer more than a nice facility and "high principled teachers," freedom from drugs and gangs, and lack of discipline and high scores of college entrance exams. There are private prep schools that can offer these items.

There is a desperate need for private schools where Christians teach youngsters the Christian philosophy of life and education, schools where every subject is presented and interpreted in the light of God's world. We need schools whose goal is to bring their students to the faith of Jesus and then train and send them forth as dedicated disciples and workers.

To accomplish the above goals we need Christian teachers who will objectively review their past training and identify and transcend those vestiges of humanist influence. Our Christian Colleges need to make a decided effort to fully integrate Christian values and principles into every area of instruction. Especially is this needed for those who would be teachers. Science teachers need to relate to their students the creative power of Jehovah in his cosmos (Ps. 19:1). Health and hygiene teachers can point out how the human body is fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14). Art teachers can demonstrate the power of the Judeao-Christian faith on western art. English teachers can show the impact of the Bible on our great literature. In sociology, teachers can show how God's word resolves human conflicts and regulates human relations. In fact, every course taught is capable of reflecting the glory of God. Religious educators of the denominational world are doing this very thing very effectively.

Parents must come to expect this truly Christianized instruction from those schools they choose for their children. We who are called upon to support them should insist that they be Christian in more than name and ideal.

More private Christian Schools are needed. Clearly our public school system has been commandeered by forces who hold an alien and hostile world view. No wonder so many of our children are corrupted, crippled spiritually, or have their faith destroyed while in our secular educational system. A youngster would have to be a spiritual giant to endure 16 years of subtle anti-Christian conditioning and survive unscathed.

May the Lord use all of us; teachers, parents, Christian leaders alike; to train up our children in the way they should go (Prov. 22:6).

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Editorial Book Views

Lands of the Bible, George W. DeHoff; DeHoff Publications, Murfreesboro, TN; 168 pages, cloth $11.95.

Anything that comes from the pen of George DeHoff is worth reading but here is a combination of the conciseness with which he writes and the extreme interest of the subject matter, the land where our blessed Lord was born, lived, died, and rose from the dead and where the Bible, that Holy Book from God, was written. It is a handbook to all the places of interest in that land (especially valuable to those who plan to travel there) and it contains scores of pictures to enhance its value. Those who love the Bible and are interested in the land it tells about will most certainly want this book.

Sermons on Great Bible Characters, George W. DeHoff; DeHoff Publications; 123 pages, paper $5.

An appropriate title would have been Great Sermons on Great Bible Characters. It contains 16 sermons, most given just as they were preached in various places, each on an outstanding Bible personality and drawing valuable lessons for us in the 20th century. The sermon of Daniel (and several others) is worth the price of the book. They all represent DeHoff at his best, and when he is at his best, there is none better.

20 Years of the Problem Page, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, Roy H. Lanier, Sr.; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 240 and 237 pages respectively; paper $5.95 each.

A tremendous teacher, a sincere scholar, and a man of much experience tackled the problems confronting the brotherhood over a 20-year period through the pages of **Firm Foundation.** He deals with nearly every issue that came up, such as attendance and autonomy, demons and divorce, elders and evolution, fellowship and foreknowledge, heaven and hell, leadership and liberalism, miracles and music, sin and salvation and many, many other problems. But he does more: he offers what he believed to be the Scriptural solution. There is a wealth of great teaching in these two volumes. Of course it would be expecting too much to think that all will agree with him in everything but all can learn from him.

Principles of New Testament Christianity, Charles E. Crouch; Quality; 208 pages, paper $5.50.

Subtitled, "Words of Faith for Today From the Most Relevent Book," its 26 chapters study the fundamental principles of the Christian religion with the aim in view of helping the reader overcome the misconceptions that has grown up around Christianity since the New Testament was written. It studies such subjects as the Bible, authority, attitudes, worship, the royal law, and "Lay Aside Every Weight." Each chapter ends with a list of study questions, making it more useful as a class study book.

Welcome to My World, Sylvia Camp; Quality; 95 pages, paper $3.95.

Designed especially for ladies and ladies' classes, this 10-chapter book will bring delight to anyone who reads or studies it. Sylvia Camp has been married to a preacher of the gospel for more than 50 years (and has loved every minute of it). She shares many of the lessons she has learned serving in that capacity (but there are many more lessons from life itself as well). You will not get half way through the first chapter until you fall in love with both her and her book. Her faith is profound, her insights rare, her outlook amazing, and her lessons grand. Do not miss this one.

Letters to the Editor

Dear brother:

I am profiting from your fine work on Romans. Great thoughts. I still cannot see the harmony of your rich comments on Romans 12:17-21 with your position on war in 13:1-8. — Johnny Ramsey, Arlington, TX

Johnny Ramsey is a great and a good man, and one of the finest gospel preachers we know, but he obviously has a blind spot here. There is absolutely no disharmony in what we have said. The difference is between individual action (as set forth in Rom. 12) and collective or governmental action (as taught in Rom. 13). Neither a Christian nor anyone else (not even the President of the United States) has a right to arrest a criminal, put him in his own jail, set up his own court, convict him, and (in serious offenses) put him to death. That would be absolutely sinful because God has authorized the government to arrest criminals, to imprison them, convict them, and when necessary to put them to death. This when done within the framework of just laws is not wrong because God instituted government for this very purpose. It would be wrong for government not to do it. We maintain therefore that since it is by God's authority it is not wrong to do it. And if it is not wrong to do it, then it cannot be wrong for a Christian (acting as an agent of the civil authorities) to do what the government is designed to do. The principle is the same on the war question. If it is wrong to have arm forces and to go to war (when it is necessary to protect good people), then it is wrong to have a police force, a prison system, and to practice capital punishment. That which is right cannot be wrong when a Christian does it.

Dear Howard:

I commend your efforts in carrying on the good work you do as editor of **Carolina Christian.** I look forward to every issue and enjoy the articles that appear in it. — Jack Simons, Clemmons, NC

Dear brother Winters:

In followup to my last letter and also our telephone conversation, I wish to address further the issue of what Christians might consider as "acceptable birth control." Two specific areas:

1. The pill. The last two decades have greatly refined the dependability and mode of action of the BCP (Birth Control Pill). This, however, does not totally negate some serious problems to which Christians should direct their attention. The target of action of the BCP was and is to prevent ovulation (egg production) by the female. This artificial hormonal alteration of the normal monthly cycle controls birth (at least in theory) by preventing conception due to absense of an egg to be fertilized. There have been in the past many cases of pill failure, from a variety of reasons, resulting in conception. Many of these pregnacies have been carried to term and beautiful, healty, viable, unexpected babies the product. My chief concern, is how many of these pill failures resulted in conception and at some point post conception, the artificial manipulation of the hormonal levels of the woman possibly ended in miscarriage. I do not have knowledge of medical studies that would afford us such statistics nor do I know if such a study would even be possible. At any rate, another of my concerns is the hazards associated with the artificial **tinkering** with the normal hormonal physiology of the body. There seems to be medical evidence of female infertility associated with the usage of BCP. It also seems to be not so uncommon for a woman who has been on BCP, once she decides to become pregnant, to lose a pregnancy or so or maybe even several before carrying one to term. If only one pregnancy ends in miscarriage and that miscarriage possibly being due to either artificial alteration of harmones after a pill failure or difficulty in carrying a pregnancy to term after usage of BCP:

might not that constitute an abortive practive even though that was not the primary intention?

2. Abstention Technique: We have discussed previously the necessity for use of reason in our procreation and also the necessity for acceptable birth control. The Psalmist expressed it, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Ps. 139:14.) Is not it interesting, God made the female so as to be fertile only approximately five days each month and left us clues to distinguish those days. Why must we look for alternative techniques to God's inbuilt processes? Why do we resort to devices, drugs, and dangers to accomplish what could be safely accomplished by a bit of planning and self-control?

I think it imperative that Christians be informed of facts and potential problems before making any choice concerning methods of birth control. I am afraid our drive-thru window society and sometimes we as Christians look for "quick-fixes" to alleviate the necessity of planning, forethought, and self-discipline. — Rocky Hoover, Sumter, SC

1985 NORTH CAROLINA LECTURESHIP

"God-Centered Minds"

Date:	September 10-12, 1985 (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)
Place:	Friendly Avenue Church of Christ 5101 W. Friendly Avenue Greensboro, NC 27410
Time:	9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. — Day session 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. — Evening session
Activities:	Lectures and Classes daily Open Forum daily Lunch provided by Friendly Avenue congregation Dinner — On your own
Keynote Speakers: (p.m.)	Tuesday — Dan Blazer Wednesday — Bob Rigdon Thursday — Al Bergeron
Lecturers/Speakers/ Teachers: (Daily)	North Carolina Ministers (Program to be announced)
Daily Themes:	Tuesday — God-Centered Minds / Self Wednesday — God-Centered Minds / Church Thursday — God-Centered Minds / The Lost

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

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C292

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of
Cornelius
Acts 10
11:1-18
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Gentiles, Fulfilled Promise 11:1, 18;
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Followed Gospel Plan 15:9, 11
  Why Peter? 2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Cor. 1:21
  Heard, Believed 11:14; 15:7
  Repentance 11:18
  Water Baptism 10:47-48

— David Pharr

(see page—9.)

editorial

HANDLING ARIGHT THE WORD OF GOD

Paul instructs Timothy, as it is translated by the American Standard Version, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) To handle aright the word of truth, the inspired word of God, is a God-given obligation imposed upon every Christian — none excepted. This means that every person must study the Bible, to the extent of his ability, for himself, to determine in his own mind what is revealed therein. This is often called the right of private interpretation (but no private interpretation in the sense in which Peter uses the term, 2 Pet. 1:20), meaning that each one must learn the truth for himself — that no man stands as a divine interpreter of the word for any other man. But this being the case, it also imposes a heavy obligation on all of us. We must learn to handle the word aright for ourselves and not let men, regardless of how skilled, lead us away from its divine teaching. No man has a right to twist and distort the word in order to force a meaning into it rather than to draw out its true meaning. Such a practice is bad enough when unlearned and unthinking men do it unwittingly, but it is an infinite evil when preachers, who should be defenders and proclaimers of the word, not only read meaning into it but teach others that the Bible is nothing but a jungle of contradictions — that it teaches one thing in one place and something entirely different in another. Take for example the following paragraph from William Barclay in his book called *In the Hands of God:*

"The trouble about the Bible is that no sooner have we quoted one text on one side, than it is often possible to quote another text on the other side. We could find authority in the Bible for destroying our enemies and for forgiving them, depending on which part of it we use. We could find authority for arguing that there is no life after death, and for arguing that life after death is the very centre of Christian belief, depending on whether we choose to quote the Old or the New Testament."

While we grant that it is possible to do what Barclay says may be done if Scriptures are permitted to be twisted from their context and destorted in their true meaning, but such is impossible, absolutely impossible, if one handles aright the word of truth. The Bible is truth (John 17:17) and truth never contradicts itself; the Bible is a unit, having one fundamental or basic message, and as a unit it cannot teach one thing in one place and something different in another; the Bible is God's word, and God cannot lie or make mistakes, He cannot be inconsistent, He cannot speak out of both sides of His mouth; the Bible is perfect, and that which is perfect has no defects. The only way to make the Bible say contradictory things on any subject is to handle it wrongly, to abuse it. Or to say the same thing another way, the only way to have the Bible teach different things on the same subject is to fail to handle it aright. It is past

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time the religious world learned this simple but fundamental principle of Bible study — it is time for all of us, including some brethren, to stop handling the word of God deceitfully and start handling it aright.

PARADOX OR MISINTERPRETATION?

While working for three weeks in Carolina Bible Camp earlier this year, we ran upon a Book Fair in Waynesville, N.C. and purchased 72 volumes, some of them rather valuable and will add richly to our library. In one of the volumes there is a hand-written note which says, "Pardox: The kingdom of God has come — the kingdom of God is yet to come." While there is no question but that Jesus used paradoxes in His teaching (e.g. Matt. 16:25), the statement pertaining to the present and future aspect of the kingdom is not so presented in the New Testament. Only by means of erronous human interpretation (in contrast with divine revelation) can it be made into a paradox.

In the New Testament the kingdom of God that has come is that which the prophets foretold (Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:44), that which Jesus promised to build and gave to Peter the keys to (Matt. 16:16-19), that over which Christ now reigns (1 Cor. 15:25; 1 Tim. 6:15), and that into which all Christians are translated (Col. 1:13) when they are born again (John 3:5). The kingdom yet to come is not a kingdom different in nature but simply the eternal phase of that which is now here — that is the spiritual kingdom moved from the material realm in which it now exists into the pure spiritual realm for which it is preparing. When Christ comes again He will cease His independent rule and be merged with the Father, who will then be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Thus the coming kingdom is just the permanent phase of the present kingdom and there is no paradox involved whatsoever when one accepts the plain teaching of the Scriptures. The kingdom that has come is the church on earth reigned over by Christ in heaven and the one yet to come is the church transferred to heaven.

But there is an unexplainable conflict with Bible teaching when the last part of what the note called a paradox is interpreted to mean that Christ is coming back to this earth to establish another kingdom and reign over it for a 1000 years — a kingdom which is different in nature, law, and purpose. Not only does this mean that the present order (called the kingdom or the church) is not that which the prophets foretold and that which Jesus came to establish, but that it is also of a different nature entirely. The present kingdom is spiritual and heavenly, the only one known in the Old and New Testaments (John 18:36) and that one is conceived to be material and earthly. The spiritual kingdom is that which is revealed in the New Testament; the material kingdom is the figment of fertile imaginations, based only upon a colossal misinterpretation of the divine Scriptures (and that is why it appears as a paradox).

The paradox vanishes when one takes the Scriptures at face value — when one handles them aright and makes the present and future kingdoms one in law, nature, purpose, and destiny. The statement about the present and future kingdom is therefore a paradox only by a misinterpretation of Scripture.

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"All I Want to Do Is Go to Heaven"

John D. White, Sr., Union, SC

The apostle Paul instructs Timothy concerning a proper attitude of mind and actions. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance. . . ." (2 Tim. 2:24-25.)

It is this writer's deepest hope that the following will be received after the manner in which it was written. That is to say, with love and prayer. Truly, the following seems to be a necessary teaching for our day within the brotherhood.

There is an evil under the sun that must be very thrilling and exciting to that old enemy of God, who is Satan. What is this terrible evil? I believe it to be that evil of branding and marking individuals or congregations without any significant proof of their wrongdoing. Generally, it is caused by well-meaning but misguided people with an exaggerated sense of their importance or authority. Compare what Paul said in these passages. "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." (Rom. 10:2.) Paul continues in verse three, to say that they forgot or were not aware of God's righteousness and so established their own form of right and wrong. Further, we are instructed, "For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies." (2 Thess. 3:11.) It does not require much effort to realize that busybodying is equated with walking disorderly. From the disorderly we are told, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:17, 18.) **Should we not mark the busybodies of our time instead of congregations and individuals whom we have not even checked out?**

Where in God's word does it say to pass judgment without knowledge, conclusion without investigation, negative action without proof? Concerning elders, the Scriptures inform us. "Against an elder receive not accusation, but before two or three witnesses." (1 Tim. 5:19.) However, this does not suggest that elders are infallible. In 1 Timothy 5:20 Paul says, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." And, in 1 Peter 5:3, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." Paul understood the principle of proving one's guilt before passing judgment. "This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." (2 Cor. 13:1.)

Brethren, it seems to me that we ought to be very careful in receiving negative talebearers, who know not what they speak. Even from the Old Testament, God's people were warned of receiving false witnesses. "One witness shall not rise up against a man for iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established." (Deut. 19:15.) If such false witness would appear, he was to be treated as the one he had accused (Deut. 19:15-21). Where is the principle in the Bible that permits those self-appointed saviors of the body of Christ to spread, without proof, their malicious tales to anyone and to any congregation which will listen.

If a brother does have something against brother or congregation, what should be his actions based on the teachings of Matthew 18:15-17? A good principle to follow when hearing from busybodies is seen in Acts 17:11. Why were they more noble? Because of their attitude. They listened, then studied to see whether the things were so. Regardless of what we hear, would it not be the best to listen, gather evidence if necessary, then go to that person or congregation instead of scattering seeds of division around the area?

It is sad to realize that there are those who feast on the latest gossip. Important subjects come up like, "Is he a sound preacher?" "Are they a sound congregation?", etc. By whose authority do they establish their own form of judgment? Who says they (whoever they are) are always right? One wonders when certain busybodies have time to work for God, seeing as to how they must preserve, protect and guard the brotherhood by informing area people of their understanding as to the soundness of other brethren. This is a fulltime job. We should, as they obviously think, know all about the "Antis," the "Pros," the "Crossroads," the "Legalists," the "Liberals," etc. One can possible understand why their home congregations are not growing. When an area becomes infected with the authority of one or two such men, where has local autonomy gone? It certainly is true that error is ever at our door. But let us not substitute one form of error for another.

Some thoughts for our collective consideration are as follows: In Proverbs 6:16-19, notice that our Lord hates the witness who speaks lies and sows discord among brethren. It seems that if a congregation is growing and baptizing people that something must be wrong with them. Brethren, where is our logic? Why must we condemn those who are winning souls as heretics? A brother in Christ (a preacher) was totally routed and destroyed by some well-meaning (?) preachers from that area and also from other states. Most of them had never even seen the man or talked with him? Was that preacher more wrong or were those who were killing him more wrong than he? We cannot find the authority that permits busybodies to spread their factious tales concerning brethren and congregations? This writer believes in book, chapter and verse for all of our authority. Nowhere does it give the busybody license to practice his awful religious malpractice.

Is there room for disagreement within our great body? How would our modern-day defenders have written concerning Barnabas when he disagreed with the apostle Paul in Acts 15:37-39? Nowhere do we find that their disagreements were written up in the Jerusalem Journal or the Philippi Press. Paul disagreed with Peter at Antioch concerning his actions in relation to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:11).

What this writer is trying to say is this. Certainly we need to defend the faith (Jude 3). We need to beware of false teachers (2 John 9-11). We need to be evangelizing (Matt. 28:18-20). We need to be praying (1 Tim. 2:1-3). We need also to be defending one another (1 Thess. 4:6-10). We need to be loving one another (1 Pet. 4:8). If we have fervent love one to another, then we will not be telling tales about certain brethren, rather, we will be going to that brother in love (Gal. 6:1).

When new congregations start, it does not always have to be due to strife, malice, hurt, distrust, etc. It can be due to personalities, misunderstandings, a desire to see the Lord's church grow even more. However, also, there could be times when the principle of 2 Corinthians 6:17 could apply. In this case, those leaving would be leaving in order to more perfectly serve their Lord. Our own congregation is a new effort here in Union, S.C.

Finally, allow me to use a line from Dr. Henry Farrar who is a brother in Christ, and, who is spending his life in Nigeria with the barest necessities. When told that probably he was sacrificing more than any other man of our generation, brother Farrar said, "Everett, all I want to do is go to heaven."

So beloved brotherhood, let us practice local autonomy. Let us meet sin head-on and defeat it through the blood of Jesus and with His word, the Bible.

But, let us never be guilty of sowing discord among the brethren. Proverbs 6:19 will surely serve as a constant reminder of what God hates. Then, let us never be guilty of the dreadful wickedness of meddling in other's affairs. "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." (1 Pet. 4:15.) It is so good when we are building each other up and winning souls. "Do all things without murmuring and disputings." (Phil. 2:14.) "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." (Col. 3:17.)

May the Lord bless each of us and keep us safe until we can see Him in His glory (1 Thess. 5:23). All I want to do is go to heaven.

Clarifying the Difficulites Arising From Alleged Contradictions

(Part 2)

James L. Meadows, Memphis, TN

III. SOURCES OF THE ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS

Some of our difficulties with alleged contradictions will be solved when we learn the sources of them. Haley[10] LISTS THE FOLLOWING: (1) difference in dates; (2) difference of authorship; (3) difference of standpoint or of object; (4) different principles and methods of arrangements; (5) different modes of computing time; (6) peculiarities of oriental idiom; (7) use of several names for persons and places; (8) use of the same words for different meanings; (9) errors in manuscripts; and (10) the imagination of critics. The six main sources of alleged contradictions may be listed as follows:

(1) **Ignorance.** Many critics boldly proclaim that the "Bible is full of mistakes and contradictions," but when asked to produce one, they are, in most cases, totally ignorant, not only of the supposed errors, but of the precious truths of the Bible. For example, some critics were confident that the Old Testament references to the Hittites (more than forty in number) were in error, but, in 1906, excavations were begun at Bogazkoy (ninety miles east of Ankara, Turkey), which proved to be the capital of the Hittite empire.

(2) **No single author claims to tell the whole story.** Each Bible writer had a definite purpose to accomplish in his writing. The Holy Spirit helped each one select the facts needed to accomplish that purpose, but no writer ever claimed to give all the facts.

(3) **Failure to be fair with the Bible. Failure to read exactly what the Bible says accounts for some of the alleged contradictions.** For example, some people think they have found a contradiction in the Genesis account of the origin of the human family. They allege that the Bible says that all people descended from Adam and Eve. They then say that Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, is said to have gone to the land of Nod and found a woman who became his wife. "If everyone descended from Adam and Eve," the unbelievers ask, "Where did this woman whom Cain married come from?" Now if these critics had been fair with the Bible they would never have come up with such a ridiculous criticism of it. The Bible does not say that Cain went into the land of Nod **alone** and then found **a woman already living** there. The Bible says that Cain "dwelt in the land of Nod:" and that while living there "he knew his wife; and she conceived and bore Enoch." (Genesis 4:16, 17.) Thus the Bible actually says that Cain lived in Nod with his wife. In other words, it is only logical to assume that he had a wife before he went to the land of Nod, that she was one of the daughters of Adam and Eve mentioned in Genesis 5:4, and that Cain chose Nod as the place where they lived.

(4) **Misinterpretation of the Bible.** For years critics have argued that Paul and James contradict each other in their teaching about faith and works. It is argued that Paul teaches salvation by faith apart from works (Rom. 4) and that James contradicts Paul by saying that salvation is by works (James 2). This alleged contradiction arises from a lack of study into what they actually wrote. A close examination of the facts will show that both men teach that a man is saved by faith when that faith leads him to perform the works of obedience which God has assigned. There is not a single author of the Bible who anywhere teaches that salvation is by **faith alone.** James said, "Ye see then how that by works a man

is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:24.) Paul wrote, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." (Gal. 5:6.) Now, where is the contradiction in these two positions? There is none!

(5) **Change in circumstances.** Men often take random statements from the Bible, failing to take into account their historical setting, and set them in opposition to each other in an effort to prove the Bible is self-contradictory. For example, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was good. . . . " (Gen. 1:31.) "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." (Gen. 6:6.) There appears to be a contradiction when these two statements are placed side by side, but the critic fails to consider that they were made over one thousand years apart. Gen. 6:6 describes man after he had reached such a level of spiritual degeneracy "that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5.) Each of the statements was perfectly correct at the time it was spoken.

(6) **Blind prejudice of the critic.** Many people simply **do not want to be convinced that the Bible is the word of God;** therefore, regardless of how much proof one may present in support of the Bible they will not believe. ". . . although in hundreds of cases criticisms of Scripture have been shown to be unfounded, those who refuse to believe in inerrancy, never seem to be satisfied. Why is this so? Does it not constitute a frame of mind that **wants** to disbelieve? Does it not constitute a frame of mind that **wants** to disbelieve? Does it reflect a viewpoint that says in effect, 'I will not believe what the Scripture teaches about itself until every objection has been answered to my satisfaction.' " [11]

A Week at CBC

Wayne Hendrix, Mocksville, NC

(Editor's Note: The following is taken from the bulletin of the Jericho church in Mocksville, where brother Hendrix preaches. It was sent to us by "Big" Sam Norman with the request that we publish it in **Carolina Christian.** We are glad to do so in order to help promote camping in the Carolinas, omitting only the things that would be meaningful only to the members at Jericho. Regardless of whether you go to Carolina Bible Camp or Palmetto Bible Camp, you are in for the time of your life. Incidentally that sixty-five feet banana split — actually if our memory serves us right, it was one hundred and thirty feet, twice sixty-five — was even more than this editor could either conceive or consume.)

Last Saturday the Hendrix family returned from a week at Carolina Bible Camp. I have some observations on this, our first experience with CBC, which I would like to share with you:

1. It was a week of Bible knowledge. "Bible is our middle name" is more than a catchy slogan; it is the theme of the camp. The young people participating in the camp began each morning and closed each evening with devotionals. During the day there were two thirty-five-minute class sessions, a thirty-five-minute singing class, a thirty-minute period of worship, and a thirty-five-minute CPR class.

2. It was a week of Christian fellowship. Friendships were established during camp that will last throughout life. It takes time and interaction to develop close relationships and both of these were in abundance at CBC. Not only did the young people interact with other, there was also interaction with adults who served as staff members and helpers. These adults are mature dedicated Christians and served as good examples for the young people. There was also fellowship among the adults. I especially appreciated the oppor-

tunity to get better acquainted with members from other congregations as well as those who attended from Jericho.

3. It was a week of fun and exercise. The afternoons were filled with activities for everyone — crafts, swimming, basketball, volleyball, softball, horseshoes, archery, hiking, etc. There was an ice cream party for the juniors and a sixty-five-foot banana split for the seniors. Skit night was super! Can Christians have fun? You better believe it!

4. It was also a week of recognition. Young people were recognized for their efforts at camp. Ribbons were given for excellence in crafts and sports and trophies were awarded in other areas.

It was a good week. I'm sure that those who attended the other weeks of camp would express the same feelings. Let us all be supportive of Christian camps and other such good works.

The Back To The Bible Crusade Report

Creasie L. Davis, High Point, NC

Clifford S. Davis will take his Back to the Bible Crusade to New Bern, North Carolina. The campaign will begin on September 15, and will continue through September 27, 1985. The meeting will be held at 917 Ceder Street in New Bern.

COME GO TO NEW BERN WITH US! We need preachers, song leaders, personal workers, and all others who will come. Motel rooms in the area range from $18.00 to $30.00 per night.

New Bern, N.C. is the county seat and port of entry of Craven County. It is located on Highway 17. New Bern, second oldest town in the present state, was settled in 1710 by a group of Swiss and Germans led by Baron Christopher de Graffenried and incorporated as a city in 1723. It became an important seaport and was the provincial capital for several years. The first provincial congress met in New Bern in 1774. The population of New Bern is about 30,000 in the city, and 100,000 in Craven County.

In 1982, The Back To The Bible Crusade campaign was conducted in Durham, N.C. Brother Davis preached for three weeks, August 1-11. The meeting was advertised daily in the newspapers and on radio during the entire period. We also passed out about 4000 handbills. We taught visitors after each service. OUR RESULTS WERE GOOD! I am happy to report that about ten were baptized. We found seven members who had not connected with the church since moving to the city. We also found seven delinquent members who had stopped attending worship. In addition, there were five faithful Black members at the White congregation when we arrived. Therefore, we were blessed to leave about thirty-one members in Durham. With the children of these families attending service, there is approximately fifty persons in attendance. One of those baptized was a Baptist minister with a degree in Bible. We are happy to say that the church has grown considerably under the leadership of Brother Stephens.

In October, Brother William Stephens returned to continue the work. Brother Stephens was the assistant minister of the Northside Church of Christ in Jacksonville, Florida where Brother Charlie McClendon is the minister.

In 1983, The Back To The Bible Crusade was conducted in Orangeburg, S.C. From that effort a congregation was established with a full-time minister to continue the work.

Please pray for us as we plan to go to New Bern, N.C. to preach the gospel of Christ.

Send all correspondence to: Back To The Bible Crusade, Clifford S. Davis, Evangelist, P.O. Box 45, High Point, N.C. 27261.

Creasie L. Davis, Reporter
Clifford S. Davis, Evangelist

The Case of Cornelius

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

The story of Cornelius' conversion is found in Acts 10. Peter's report of what happened is recorded in Acts 11:1-18. The statement of 11:4 that Peter "expounded it by order" is significant. He reviewed the events "in orderly sequence" (NASV). In Acts 15:7-9, Peter cites the case of Cornelius as evidence of the acceptability of the Gentiles.

The **character** of Cornelius **demonstrates** the **need** all men have for the saving gospel. Many assume that moral integrity and religious sincerity are sufficient evidence of salvation. Cornelius is described as having exemplary character. Yet Acts 11:14 shows that he needed to hear words by which he could be saved. In 15:7, this is shown to be the gospel (cf. Rom. 1:16; 10:17).

Up to this time the gospel had not been preached to Gentiles. It was the Divine purpose, however, that the gospel be given to all nations (Matt. 28:19). Thus the case of Cornelius **fulfilled God's promise** regarding the Gentiles. See Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 62:2 and Acts 2:39.

Since neither Cornelius nor Peter understood the Divine intention, the **visions were necessary to open the door** of Cornelius, the Gentile's house, that Peter the Jew might come in. First, Cornelius had a vision of an angel who told him to send for Peter. Peter himself has a thrice repeated vision which convinced him to go. These visions were not a part of what some people call "a conversion experience" but were intended only to bring the preacher and the audience together.

The coming of the Holy Spirit to the household of Cornelius is often misunderstood. The text itself, however, plainly shows the purpose. The **Spirit** came and they spoke in tongues to **convince the doubtful.** Peter and the six brethren with him were thereby convinced that God would be pleased with these Gentiles' baptism. All doubt was removed. When the Jewish brethren in Judea learned that the Spirit was given to the Gentiles they were convinced also.

It should be observed that this gift of the Spirit was not an ordinary thing. Peter cited no other example of such a direct outpouring of the Spirit except at the beginning of the church on Pentecost, when the Spirit came in the same direct manner to the apostles (11:15-17).

The case of Cornelius **established a precedent** regarding the Gentiles. It was not necessary that the visions and the coming of the Spirit be repeated for other Gentiles. This one instance of these things proved forever that Gentiles were acceptable. When an issue over the Gentiles arose and was being considered at Jerusalem, Peter cited this one case as sufficient proof (15:7-11).

After we have examined the miraculous elements which led up to the conversion of this household and seen that the purpose of these elements was to bring in a new phase of the Christian dispensation (the gospel to the Gentiles), we are then impressed with the fact that their actual conversion was by **following** the **same gospel plan** that all other men must follow to be saved. Peter affirms that there is no difference and that all are saved by grace (15:9, 11).

In every case of conversion there is the necessity of receiving the word. Why did not the angel tell Cornelius what to do? Because God had ordered that through the gospel in "earthen vessels" (men) the gospel is to be delivered (2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Cor. 1:21). Thus they heard and believed (15:7). Repentance is also named (11:18). And, as in all other New Testament examples of conversion, they were required to be baptized in water in the name of the Lord. Cornelius was not saved by seeing an angel. They were not saved by receiving a miraculous outpouring of the Spirit. They were saved when they heard, believed and obeyed the gospel.

Is Prison Ministry Worth It?

Rick Watson, El Reno Federal Prison, OK

In 1981 four convicts began a Bible study at the Federal prison near El Reno, Oklahoma. **Without knowledge** that Christ's church existed in the free world those convicts used the Bible to establish a First Day worshipping, communion observing, preacher/teacher/song leader/benevolent worker training, dynamic church. The result has been over 150 baptisms in the prison and another 150 outside FCI El Reno. Convicts who became saints at El Reno have now established seven congregations, one of these in the city of Barranquilla, Columbia, South America. The missionary responsible is a former drug runner who was converted at El Reno, then was released and immediately deported home. This was 18 months ago. That South American congregation now has over 50 assembling each first day.

The teaching going on at the El Reno prison church includes that the fruit of a Christian is another Christian, that saints must bear fruit or burn, John 15:1-8, and that a saint must establish the church where ever he goes.

The convict saints are also supporting three young people at the Tipton home for needy children. Through the pages of the **Prison Work Exhorter** periodical and the recently published **Battle Plan:** A Handbook for Jail/Prison Ministry, the convict saints at El Reno are endeavoring to teach free world saints how to start and maintain a successful jail and/or prison ministry. The **Battle Plan** handbook can be obtained by sending name and address with $4.70 to **Battle Plan,** Box 750064, Duncan, OK 73575. A subscription to the **Prison Work Exhorter** continues to be free of charge and is available from the same address as the handbook.

(Editor's Note: **The Battle Plan** *is a how to book on teaching the glorious gospel to those behind bars. It should be in every church library, and one or more families in every church should get copies and devote themselves to begin working among prisoners immediately. As with brother Watson, the results could be astonishing.)*

God Bless America

F.G. Smith, Spartanburg, SC

There are dark clouds of fear and unrest hanging over the horizon. People are asking, "What's happening in this world?" "Where do we go from here?" "What can we do?" We must remember that, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14:34.) "Blessed is the nation, whose God is the Lord." (Ps. 33:12.)

The moral condition of America is not good. Our forefathers founded our nation on the moral and spiritual laws as set forth in the Bible (God's word) in the founding of this nation. John Hancock said, "We must all be unanimous. There must be no pulling different ways. We must all hang together." "Yes," replied Ben Franklin, "We must indeed all hang together, or we shall hang separately."

The foundation of our nation is "One Nation Under God."

We have the heritage of a godly nation, but if we become severed from our historical roots, tragedy awaits us. There are many people who believe that unless America falls to its knees in prayer to God, this nation may not survive many more years as a free and independent nation. **Headline:** "Government study predicts a gloomy future for the world. Poverty and hunger will continue to spiral." **(Spartanburg Herald,** July 24, 1980.)

In the long ago, God said through Moses, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deut. 30:19.)

God said to His people through Hosea, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn. . . ." (Hosea 4:1-3.)

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee. . . ." (Hosea 4:6.) An invitation: "Come and let us return unto the Lord. . . ." (Hosea 6:1.) After rejecting the invitation, God said, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help." (Hosea 13:9.)

Dr. Robert Grant said, "Our nations primary problem is a lack of moral and spiritual leadership." James Kilpatrick, writing in **Nation's Business** gave some alarming statistics from the 1976 FBI Files. During that year there were more than 20,000 murders, 56,000 cases of rape, 465,000 robberies, 485,000 cases of aggravated assault.

The following statistics are from other sources: In the USA, there are more than 17,000,000 alcoholics or problem drinkers; 15,000,000 homosexuals; 1,000,000 children, yearly, subjects of child abuse. Smoking causes 320,000 deaths yearly; two and one-half billion dollars was spent in 1979 on beer. In 1870, one out of 1,200 marriages ended in divorce; in 1970, it was 1 out of 3. In 1975, 13,000,000 teenage girls became mothers outside of wedlock; in 1976, 1,115,000 women had abortions.

In view of the above statistics, it seems that a sense of frustration and despair is everywhere. In the despair, we try to find practical solutions to the problems we now face. Someone asked, "Are we living in an age of no tomorrow?" "Has nature let us down?" "Has God left the receiver off?" "Is time running out?" America is pumping more and more money into newer and better systems of destroying life on earth.

IS COMMUNISM DESTROYING AMERICA? Why is it that we hear little, if any, teaching against communism? God said, ". . . and proclaim liberty throughout the land. . . ." (Lev. 25:10.)

The following comment is based on a book called **The Red Devil of Communism,** by E.J. Daniels of Orlando, Florida. "Communism is the most sinister evil in the world. It is the greatest foe of Christianity. It is Anti-God, Anti-Church, Anti-religion. It is an organized movement to overthrow the government and destroy freedom of speech, freedom of press, and freedom of worship."

It may be later than you think: Home Bible study is now restricted in Los Angeles, Boston, Atlanta, Maryland, and Michigan.

The late congressman, William D. Upshaw, from Georgia, tells the tragic story of what coulds happen if the communists ever take over the USA:

GONE: is the little school house on the hill, where the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm was repeated daily.

GONE: is the Church in the wildwood, where the singing of the old time songs ring out loud and clear, such as, "Where We'll Never Grow Old" and "Nearer My God to Thee."

GONE: is the old-fashion family alter, where the family that prays together, stays together.

GONE: is the religious funerals, where "Rock of Ages" and "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" are heard no more to comfort the bereaved who have lost loved ones.

The following is a quote from a book by James D. Cox, on **Bishops and Deacons:** "If we can only be the salt of the earth and confront all kinds of evil with the undiluted Word, then perhaps the Lord will save our nation and ourselves from human bondage in this life."

Is America sick? If so, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?" (Jer. 8:22.)

GOD HAS A PRESCRIPTION FOR AMERICA: 2 Chron. 7:14: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land."

1. **IF MY PEOPLE:** The Jews were once God's people, but now only Christians all over the world. "Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentiles that he might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross." (Eph. 2:14-16.)

2. **WHICH ARE CALLED BY MY NAME:** The disciples were called Christians. (Acts 11:26.) "For there is none other name under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.)

3. **SHALL HUMBLE THEMSELVES, AND PRAY:** "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exhalt you in due time." (1 Pet. 5:6.) Paul said: "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thess. 5:17.)

4. **AND SEEK MY FACE:** "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. . . ." (Isa. 55:6.) ". . . seek, and ye shall find. . . ." (Matt. 7:7.)

5. **AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS:** "Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes." (Ps. 119:155.) "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be forgiven. . . ." (Acts 3:19.)

6. **THEN WILL I HEAR FROM HEAVEN:** James said, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. . . ." (James 5:15.) "O, Lord, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer. . . ." (Ps. 17:1.) "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble. . . ." (Ps. 20:1.)

7. **AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SINS:** "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. . . ." (Jer. 3:22.) "Turn ye again **now** every one from his evil way. . . ." (Jer. 25:5.) "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. . . ." (Is. 1:18.)

8. **AND WILL HEAL THEIR LAND:** Wake up America, and pray, that God will bless our country, and keep our land from being overrun by the communists, homosexuals, rapists and murderers.

In the church of our Lord, we need elders, deacons, preachers and others, to speak out against these and other sins in and out of the church.

". . . and proclaim liberty throughout the land. . . ." (Lev. 25:10.) Pray, **God Bless America.**

In 2 Chron. 7:14, God asked His people to do three things:

1. "Humble themselves and pray"
2. "Seek the face of God"
3. "Turn from their wicked ways"

God said He would do three things:

1. "Then will I hear from heaven"
2. "Will forgive their sins"
3. "And will heal their land"

America, "What are we waiting for?" — F.G. Smith, 320 Spruce St., Tudor Wood, Apt. 13 A, Spartanburg, SC 29303

Here's The Answer

Howard Winters

To Questions You've Asked

"Could you kindly explain to me, in **Carolina Christian,** what the Bible teaches on 'the cup' Jesus instituted in Matthew 26:26-28? Some say He meant one cup only which when blessed becomes the New Testament." —Doublas Birttell Sibagia, Zambia, Africa.

Elsewhere in brother Sibagia's letter he says, "The congretation here is very small. We have about 50 members in the church, although we have very big problems. We have an American missionary in the church who has come to teach on one cup, no Sunday School, no Bible college, etc. We are very puzzled with this new teaching. But we pray that God will help us so that the church may not be divided. Pray for us and the body as a whole."

It is a sad thing to be faced with the fact that some brethren are more devoted to binding matters of expediency as matters of faith than they are in preaching the soul-saving gospel (this is true here in America as well as in Africa). This has caused much heartache and division in the Lord's church. And when we send out missionaries to teach the gospel it is even sadder that they go teaching their traditions to the disruption of churches already established in foreign lands. As we see it, there is absolutely no excuse for a sincere student of the Bible to make the blunder in Biblical understanding that the "one cup, no class" brethren have made, and even less excuse for them to spread it abroad and try to bind their practice and misunderstanding on the whole world. But before dealing with the question directly, let us observe three principles that will help clarify this matter:

1. We must recognize that the Bible as well as all speech, whether written or oral, often uses figurative language. There are many different figures of speech used by the writers of the Scriptures, but we will concern ourselves here only with one, the one that bears directly upon our question. It is the figure know as metonymy. **Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, Unabridged** (2nd. ed.) defines metonymy as follows: "Use of the name of one thing for that of another associated with or suggested by it (e.g.'the White House' has decided for 'the President has decided ')." Such figurative language is common in all speech and it is readily understood by everyone (in fact it is almost impossible to misunderstand). For example, in Vol. 20, No. 9 and Vol. 21, No. 4 of **Carolina Christian** we had two lengthy editorials under the title, "Read These Men." Did anyone take that title literally or did everyone understand that we meant read what these men have written? By metonymy we put "men" for what the men had written. That would be difficult indeed to misunderstand. So it is with the words of Jesus in Matthew 26:26-28. The cup is put for the contents of the cup. We know this because they were to drink the cup (not the literal cup but the contents of the cup). It is all but impossible to understand it any other way. Can anyone visualize them drinking the containers? Yet if Jesus meant the literal cup, they were to drink it.

2. The force of traditional practices. In the frontier days of this country Christians were scattered over wide areas and churches were usually small. When they met for worship, they did so in private homes or in one room church buildings. When they took the Lord's Supper it was traditional and practical (at least to some degree) to use only one container for the fruit of the vine. (The writer remembers as a boy meeting in a small log church building, built shortly after the Civil War, in which all gathered drunk from the same cup. We thought nothing of it then because it could be passed to the whole congregation in a matter of minutes and we were blissfully ignorant of any health problems such might create.) But as large cities began to spring up, and churches kept pace with the growth, more and more people assembled in one place. Churches with 100, 200, 500, or 1000 members found it impractical for all to drink from one container. This is even more acute now with some church numbering into the thousands (e.g. Madison, TN with over 5000). At the same time there was the growing awareness that disease was spread by all drinking from the same container. So for both practical and health reasons city churches (and eventually nearly all churches) began to use multiple containers. Those who were bound to the traditional practice and were not willing to change (and change does not come easy for any of us) went to the Bible to try to prove that the traditional practice was precisely what was required by the Scriptures. When they say that the Lord had required them to drink the one cup (the contents) rather than to drink

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Clayton Pepper, Editor

from one cup (the container) they sought to add a new element to the Lord's table, namely, the literal cup. The Lord put two elements on His table (bread and the fruit of the vine) but they added a third (the literal cup in order to maintain their traditional practice. They thus say that the bread represents the body, the fruit of the vine represents the blood, and the cup (container) the new covenent. But they have never bothered to tell us why they must have the new covenent symbolized on the Lord's table when we have it in our possession in the New Testament. This shows the power of traditional practices, and to what ridiculous extremes one will go when he does not want to give them up.

3. The distinction between matters of faith and matters of expediency. Or to say the same thing another way, the distinction between the essential and the incidential. The essentials are that which the Lord has commanded (in this case the Lord's Supper, made up of the bread and the fruit of the vine); the incidentials are that which may be legitimately used in carrying out the essentials. The bread is an essential; the plate upon which it is passed is an incidential. The fruit of the vine (what is called by metonymy the cup) is an essential; the container (the literal cup) is an incidential. It seems to me that one would have to be blinded by prejudice or be a genius at twisting language not to see this. The command is to take the Lord's Supper. That is a matter of faith. But how the bread and the fruit of the vine is dispensed (and the fruit of the vine must be in a container of some kind) is a matter of expediency. It seems to us that no one with an elementary knowledge of the distinction between matters of faith and matters of expediency should have any problem whatsoever in seeing this.

But as with everything else we should let the Bible itself settle this matter. So let us go to the law and to the testimony and see what it says about the cup (the cup to be used on the Lord's table):

1. Jesus gave thanks for the cup (Matt. 26:27), but that for which He gave thanks was (that is, it represents) His blood of the New Testament (Matt. 26:28). This was obviously the fruit of the vine.

2. That for which Jesus gave thanks and called the cup He told His disciples to drink (Matt. 26:27). Did He ask them to drink the literal cup or did He mean for them to drink the contents?

3. That which He commanded them to drink was called "My blood of the new testament" which was shed for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28). That is, the cup represented His blood by which the New Testament was ratified. I see no conceivable way this could be understood as the literal container rather than the contents.

4. They all drunk of the cup Jesus gave them (Mark 14:23).

5. That of which they drunk is called the blood of the New Testament, which was shed for many (Mark 14:24). Again we see that that which they drunk (the cup) represented the blood. Was it the literal cup or the fruit of the vine? We are not left to guess about the answer:

6. That which Jesus told them to drink (when He took the cup and gave it to them) was the fruit of the vine (Mark 14;25).

7. The cup was to be divided among them (Luke 22:17). Did they divide the literal cup or the contents of the cup?

8. That which they divided among them was the fruit of the vine (Luke 22;28).

9. The cup of blessing is the communion of the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). In which do we have communion with the blood of Christ, the literal cup or the fruit of the vine?

10. The cup is something we drink (1 Cor. 10:21).

11. The cup Jesus took after supper (when He had supped, KJV) represented the New Testament in His blood — that is, the blood with which He ratified the New Testament (1 Cor. 11:25). It is the blood not the New Testament that is represented.

12. The cup which Jesus took (which was the New Testament in His blood) was that which He told them to drink in rememberance of Him (1 Cor. 11:25). Clearly this has reference to the contents.

13. We are to eat the bread and **drink** the cup to show the Lord's death until He comes again (1 Cor. 11:26).

14. One must eat the bread and drink the cup in a worthy manner (1 Cor. 11:27).

15. One is to eat the bread and drink the cup after he examines himself (1 Cor. 11:28).

16. One who eats and drinks (the cup) in an unworthy manner eats and drinks damnation to himself (1 Cor. 11:29).

As far as I can determine, this has looked at every passage in the New Testament which uses the word cup in relation to the Lord's Supper, and in every case it means, by the figure of metonymy, the contents (the fruit of the vine) which is contained in the literal cup. There is no passage in which the literal cup represents the new covenant in connection with the Lord's table. Such a concept is nothing but the figment of fertile minds in an effort to bind a traditional practice (which is not traditional any more) on the children of God. We must conclude then that the cup in the Lord's Supper is the fruit of the vine, and whether that fruit of the vine is contained in one container or ten thousand it is still one cup — the cup of the Lord, which represents the shed blood of our blessed Savior, shed for us on the cruel cross of Calvery for the remission of our sins. To confuse that with a literal cup is sacrilegious.

A Dead Fish and Perception

Michael O. Stone, Winston-Salem, NC

The apostle Paul spoke when writing to the Corinthians, "So you should not pass judgment on anyone before the right time comes. Final judgment must wait until the Lord comes; he will bring to light the dark secrets and expose the hidden purposes of people's minds. And then everyone will receive from God the praise he deserves." (1 Cor. 4:5.)

In recent days, my wife and I have made two separate trips by air to New York City. On the second trip, we experienced something rather unusual. We were eating in a Chinese restaurant in the China Town section of New York when all of a sudden our eyes caught a rather large fish aquarium across the room. It was not so much the aquarium that caught our attention as it was what was in it. Among the large fish swimming around there was one big fish that looked like it was dead.

As we sat there eating our meal and at the same time looking at that rather repulsive sight across the room, we decided to ask the waitress about the fish and also let her know of our displeasure in having to be exposed to such a sight while eating our meal.

We did and she explained that several of the fish in the tank had just moments ago arrived from overseas. Due to the great travel distance, the fish had to be given medication to relax them for the trip. All of the fish except the dead looking one had come out from their imposed travel sleep. She let us know that the fish was very much alive and healthy irregardless of our perception that it was dead. Here was a fish that I had accused of being dead when in reality it was very much alive. A thing may not be in reality as a man perceives it to be!

Have you ever made a judgment that you later found was not based upon the real facts? I have many times and I feel a deep sense of sorrow, shame and regret in that I cannot go back and undo the judgment. All I can do now is to repent and not do the same thing again.

We must be very careful when we pass judgments in regard to other people's lives. For you see, everything may not be as we have perceived it to be.

Before passing judgment upon those whose lives we perceive to be lacking in spiritual attributes, let us take a close look and see if we have all the facts. The wife of a non member who arrived to services tardy because her husband pulled the plug wires on the car may in reality be more spiritual and service conscious than some others who were on time.

Jesus said, "God will judge you in the same way you judge others, and he will apply to you the same rules you apply to others." (Matt. 7:2.)

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

New Freedom in Poland

Sopot, Poland. Polish Christians are now free to hand out Bibles and Christian literature on the streets of this communist country for the first time in the history of mission work in Eastern Europe. In taking advantage of this new liberty Christians in Sopot have set up a tiny stand in the town square. Ed Wharton, who has made eight preaching trips to Poland, said that the Polish Christians are "bold as lions."

It appears that the more permissive attitudes of the Polish government toward religious activities may be spreading to other countries as well. The church in Yugoslavia is presently applying for legal status and Bibles are being printed in Hungary. Bob Hare, of Brekenridge, Texas has been actively involved in Eastern European missions for a number of years and has stated that he feels "very positive and optimistic about what's happening in parts of Eastern Europe."

Former Pastor Studies, Forms Church

Abilene, Texas. Kim Warren, raised in the Episcopalian tradition, used to wish that he could live in the first century. As Warren studied his Bible intensely, he came to see in the Bible "not a religion, but a people." "I started reading and tried to divorce myself from all my pre-conceived notions," he said. The result was that Warren and his family initiated their own restoration movement.

In the course of his study Warren came across a tract entitled "Churches of Christ: Who Are These People?" To his surprise the tract outlined almost exactly the beliefs and convictions he had come to hold through his own study. Warren then contacted Terry Bell, pulpit minister of the Hillcrest Church of Christ in Abilene. Bell and other members studied with the Warrens and there is now a church that meets on the Warren's Mountain Pass Ranch. However, Bell is quick to add that the Warren's own study is responsible for their current belief and position and that "this is not victory for the Hillcrest church."

ACC Renamed

Montgomery, Alabama. The board of trustees of Alabama Christian College had voted unanimously to establish a university and name it Faulkner University. The decision was announced April 23 and was immediately effective. The new name is in honor of James H. Faulkner, long-time chairman of ACC's board of trustees and benefactor. The school will seek accredita-

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tion as a university and plans to establish five colleges under Faulkner University umbrella.

In a more recent action by the university, Wendell Winkler has been named as the new chairman of the school's Bible department. Winkler's duties began August 1.

Thai Brethren Face Guns

N.E. Thailand. Ted Lingren, missionary to Northeast Thailand, reports that since the beginning of the dry season, the Vietnamese army has been attacking resistance groups in Cambodia and making advances. They have even been making forays into Thailand, shooting and killing along the way. Christians who live along the border have had homes destroyed by artillery fire and individuals have been shot at.

More than 20,000 refugees have fled from the area of Ban Tua Yang and gone to the district of Prakon Chai. Chris Ward, a missionary living in Lorat, Thailand, is coordinating efforts to help the refugees. The brethren in N.E. Thailand see this as a great opportunity to lead many of the refugees to Christ. Churches and individuals wishing to contribute to this unique cause may write to the Thai Refugees Fund, Wooddale Church of Christ, 3509 Boxdale, Memphis, TN 38118.

Carolina Church News

DAVID PHARR, ROCK HILL, SC

NORTH CAROLINA

Yadkinville. Howard Winters will preach in a gospel meeting September 23-27.

Winston-Salem. After five years Jim Coviello has ended his tenure with the South Fork congregation. He will continue to live in the area and will serve part-time with the South Stokes church in King.

Asheboro. The Meadowbrook Road brethren have given several hundred dollars to asssist victims of domestic violence. They work in conjunction with the Battered Women's Shelter and are conducting Bible studies at the shelter every other Sunday. The chaplain at Randolph County Prison invited a group of men from the church to sing at the prison one Saturday in August.

Raleigh. Brooks Avenue has engaged Bill Turner to be their minister on involvement. The Turners are moving from Abilene, Texas.

Wilson. The church purchased adjoining property for additional classroom space.

Washington. A considerable portion of the minister's support is being discontinued because of limited funds at the supporting congregation in Alabama. This is one of several mission points in the Carolinas that are facing hardship because of supporting funds being discontinued. Able congregations are urged to consider coming to the aid of some of these places.

NC Conversions

Advance 2; Yadkinville 7; Carver Rd., Winston-Salem, 4; Northview, Statesville, 1; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 1; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 2; Archdale, Charlotte, 2; Eastchester, High Point, 1; Washington 3. Total: 23.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Spartanburg. Central has schedules B.B. James for a meeting series October 6-10. Micky Bell has resigned his work at Central and expects to relocate in the near future. Albert Gardner continues as the pulpit minister.

Taylors. Northeast has scheduled a Youth Retreat October 25-26.

Lancaster. The congregation has forty-two copies of *Christian Hymns II* which they can donate to a church that can use them. Contact Wayne Walton, 803-285-2977.

Lexington. The church has begun a ministry at the Central Correctional Institute in Columbia. They will be overseeing the Chapel Program.

Winnsboro. An open house for the new building will be held on Sunday afternoon October 27. This will be followed by four evening services (27-30) with preaching by David Pharr.

Rock Hill. Charlotte Avenue has scheduled V.P. Black for a gospel meeting October 6-10.

SC Conversions

N. Charleston 2; St. Andrews Rd., Columbia 5; Mauldin 1; Northeast, Taylors, 1; Fairview, Spartanburg 3; Summerville 3; S. Pinckney, Union, 1; Lexington 1; Winnsboro 1; Bypass, Union, 3. Total: 21.

South Pinckney Street, Union

RUSSELL BOBO REPORTING: Another record was achieved by our congregation on August 18. We enjoyed 110 in attendance. Many of our visitors have expressed warmly their appreciation for our inviting them to be with us.

We are so thankful for God's blessings. Having 110 in worship services lets us know that God is truly blessing our efforts.

As a congregation, we ask the prayers of all the area brethen for our continued success. We are so thankful for enjoying our recent record, which is so encouraging, since we are only about seven months old as a congregation.

BACK ISSUES OF THE **GOSPEL MINUTES** AVAILABLE SOON

The **Gospel Minutes,** published weekly by brothers Dillard and Clem Thurman of Fort Worth, Texas, has been around for many years. The present circulation of this paper is now over 125,000. Many people have desired to obtain back issues of this paper which are no longer available from 1959 thru 1982.

Therefore, brothers Dillard and Clem Thurman have given me permission to reprint and make available bound volumes of this paper beginning with the year 1959.

If you are interested in obtaining any of these back issues, please send a #10 self-addressed, stamped envelope to the following address: **C.S. Gatlin, Jr., P.O. Box 1397, Sandpoint, Idaho 83864.** I will in turn send you a price list and information concerning printing and delivery dates.

BOOK REVIEW

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

Mrs. Preacher, Karen Northeim; College Press Publishing Company, Inc., P.O. Box 1132, Joplin, MO, 64802; 139 pages, paper $3.95.

This book is subtitled "Succeeding as a Minister's Wife" and is written for both those in the parsonage and the pews. The author has had over 20 years experience as a preacher's wife and 24 years experience as a mother of three children. She also writes observation, involvement, and survey information concerning preachers' wives. How can the minister's wife be more effective?

How can church people encourage their minister's wife? What do counselors cite as the reasons why minister's marriages have and are in trouble? These are some questions this book deals with. Some of the subjects covered are public image, living with the preacher, expectations, criticism, family attention, friendships within the local congregation, 'salary worthy of the servant,'' and the parsonage. It is directed to the preacher's wife, and so deals with those things of vital need and importance to her. We believe that it will then help the preacher's wife, the preacher, and even the congregation to better understand the preacher's wife, her needs, and her relationship to you! We highly recommend that every congregation buy it for their library and that every member make the time to seriously read it, that every minister purchase it, seriously read it, then lovingly give it to his wife; that every minister's wife seriously meditate on this book's message. Preacher's wives are a misunderstood group by those who need to understand her the most, her husband and the church. We believe this book will help. Read it well!

What the Bible Says About God the Ruler, Jack Cottrell; College Press Publishing Company, P.O. Box 1132, Joplin, MO 64802, 465 pages, hardbound $13.50.

This book is a study of God's providence, His working sovereignty, or how God is related to the on-going world. It covers such areas as alternatives to divine providence, general and special providence, God's sovereign will and man's free will, prayer, miracles, and the problem of evil. It is written in a clear and easy to react style, and will help you to better understand Israel's history in the sacred record and God's involvement in the lives of His people, nature, and the history of man today. It is an excellent resource for studying, teaching, and preaching this essential but often misunderstood doctrine of the holy word. For example, are we ''providentially hindered'' as we so freely use the term today? To what extent can we truthfully say ''Lord willing?'' We recommend this book for your study. It is rich with material that is well written.

The Fool of God, Louis Cochran; College Press Publishing Company, Inc., P.O. Box 132, Joplin, MO 64802, 407 pages, hardbound $11.95.

Here is a novel based on the life of Alexander Campbell. In its essentials, the book is factual while his life is told as a work of fiction. Each character is real and played his role ''much as is related here'' and every event actually occurred, the author tells us. It is not an effort to trace his religious thinking but it is an effort to be a portrait of a man. However, with a little thought, the reader will have a glimpse into the development of his thinking and how it effected his life. It is enjoyable reading.

All Mine to Give, Sue Hill Boggs; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX, 79604; 68 pages, paper, $2.75.

Subtitled ''Above and Beyond the Call of Duty,'' this book is a practical study of New Testament love — agape. With this study, the author makes a down-to-earth application of love as seen through the eyes of God to our human relationships, especially in the home and the church. In the dedication, she tells of her father's ''legacy of love,'' how she felt special in his eyes. The author is also an experienced ladies Bible class teacher, so she writes from both experience and study. This book is excellent for a ladies Bible class, nursing home class, private study, and is an excellent resource of illustrations and knowledge for preaching. We highly recommend it.

Teen to Teen. Ruth Henrietta Smith; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 56 pages, paper, $2.50.

This is an activity-oriented study directed at the problems facing young people today. It is a book dealing with principles in practical application covering such concepts as trust, sin, the new life of conversion, love, and hope. Each lesson contains a list of goals for that lesson, the text, group discussion of the text, and assignment. Its thirteen lessons are designed to inspire teens to share Christ with others, reinforce confidence in their salvation, and provide sharing in a classroom discussion format. A fine book for the teenage classroom.

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“DOES HOLLYWOOD SELL DRUGS TO KIDS?”

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

The lead article in the July 21, 1985, issue of *Parade* magazine raises the question “Does Hollywood push drugs to kids?” Writer Michael Satchell explains how motion pictures glamorize drug use and thereby encourage drug abuse among young people. The message of these films is that drugs such as marijuana and cocaine are “casual, normal and inevitable,” according to one source quoted.

Hollywood is a glamour industry and millions are affected by what they see on the screen. Even those who know better may find their inhibitions eroding as they view sin repeatedly portrayed in a favorable light. When stars (who often serve as role models for youth) are depicted using drugs, enjoying it and apparently without unfavorable consequences, many will be influenced to want to try the same thing. The *Parade* article also cites the widespread problem of drug lyrics in rock music.

One point in the article seemed especially valid. Unless parents raise a strong objection, little will be done to change the way movies favorably portray drug abuse. “If parental attitudes were strong enough and communicated to us, a movie showing pot smoking could be rated X. *Where are the parents?”* (emphasis mine, D.P.) This quote was from the chief of the group that decides movie ratings.

Is it not paradoxical that secular magazines are now attacking evils which many professed Christians have come to accept? When preachers have warned parents of the influences of Hollywood, they have often been ignored as extremists and alarmists. Maybe, though, some will listen now that secular writers are saying the same thing.

Does it surprise anyone that Hollywood is pushing drugs? It should not. For a long time the movies have pushed fornication, nudity, violence, drinking, unlawful divorce, profanity and like evils. How many have lost their morals and their souls because of the influence of the movies? It is hardly astonishing that drug abuse has been added to the ungodly list, which ungodly people continue to force onto an unwary, weak and impressionable society.

No, everything about movies is not wrong. But so much is, that Christian people must never relax their guard against Hollywood’s insidious influence.

editorial

WHY DO WE DIFFER?

We recall baptizing a man during the middle '50's in the mountains of North Carolina who for the remainder of his life prided himself on what to him was an undeniable fact, namely, *all* members of the church of Christ agreed on everything, that there was simply no differences among them. Most of us would agree that this is ideal, but it was not so then, is not so now, and will probably never be so in this world. On the great fundamentals of the faith (that which is essential to salvation) we were in general agreement (and the good brother referred to never went beyond the fundamentals to deal with matters of opinion) then (but perhaps a little less so now). But even then there were areas of differences but they were not emphasized as they came to be in the late '60's and early '70's. We are now forced to admit (if we are honest, and how could we be faithful to Christ without being honest) that we differ widely on some subjects (e.g., the indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit, the status of a remarried divorcee, the Christian's responsibility to the government, especially in time of war, and now a new controversy which we think offers unlimited potential danger to our view of Biblical inerrency, namely, whether Paul made a mistake and acted hypocritically in Acts 21). Thus, when we are perfectly frank, we must admit that there are numerous differences among us. But why, since we all claim to believe the Bible and let it settle for us every matter of faith and practice, do we differ? There are many reasons, and among them are the following:

1. Every Christian is on a different level of learning — that is, some are more mature in the faith than others. We all reach our conclusions upon the basis of the knowledge we possess. Or to say it another way, we use only the material in our own minds to form judgments. It should be obvious, then, that a new convert (especially from denominationalism or Catholicism) who has had his mind saturated with worldly philosophy or false religious doctrines could not have the same amount of solid rock Biblical material in his heart and mind from which to form his conclusions as one who has been in the church for years and has been a close student of the Bible. And when two people reach two different conclusions on the same subject, based upon their store of knowledge, they differ. The difference may be major or minor, but given a love for the truth, a little time to study, and a more mature faith, the difference will be remedied.

2. Some are reluctant to accept anything that might throw new light upon a subject they have already settled in their own mind. We personally had to struggle with this in the middle '50's. We were a dyed-in-the-wool pacifist. It was such a comfortable position to us that we quite frankly did not want to change (because we hated war then and we hate it worse now). But we came face to face with some facts that had to be dealt with. We either had to ignore them (close our eyes and pretend they did not exist) or else we would have to change our whole approach

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to the subject. We changed, not because we wanted to, but because the facts and truth forced it upon us. But not all of us (as sad as this fact is) are willing to take a look at the evidence when it seems to be going against us. When some accept the challenge of new facts and others do not, it is inevitable that a difference occur. When there is a difference, someone has either ignored the facts or else misapplied them. When all the facts are accepted and correctly applied by all, agreement is inevitable.

3. The truth is so profound in its depths, so rich in its contents, so universal in its scope, so strict in its application, so challenging in its life-changing effects, so final in its conclusions, and so uncompromising in its nature and demands that the marvel is not that we differ on minor matters (as did the Christians in Rome, as is recorded in Romans 14), but that, given our different backgrounds, our different moral training, our different social and mental standing, our different cultural heritage, we agree almost totally on essentials. The things upon which we agree are, for the most part, the vital matters of Christianity; the things over which we differ, while they may be serious in nature, often are things that do not affect salvation — that is, they are areas where differences are permitted. To love the truth, to study the truth, and to accept the truth when it is known or understood are vital to the unity for which Christ prayed (John 17).

4. Some are able to advance more rapidly in the introduction and application of expediencies. Most of us have a tendency to do things precisely as they were done by our fathers before us. But time marches on and new methods replace the old. Those who are not willing to change in methodology will be left behind. It is a well-known fact that in the past differences have arisen over such things as fancy meeting houses, Bible classes, communion cups, use of Bible class literature, the purchase of flowers for the sick or dead, and many other things that properly fall into the category of expediency. But some good brethren, because the practice of these things was a break with the past, it was not doing it as it had always been done, refused to see them as expediencies and branded them as additions to the divine plan. This created differences, some of them so serious as to cause division. But fortunately time has convinced most of us that the things named are matters of expediencies and are therefore right and needful (or rather useful) in carrying out the commandments of our precious Lord. But the problem is not solved. Our age of technology has thrust upon us many new expediencies; some are slow to accept them and some reject them altogether. As long as some move on and others lag behind in the introduction and application of expediencies there will continue to be differences among us. We must therefore learn to live with this fact or destroy ourselves by division after division.

5. In our judgment, one of the greatest causes of differences among us is the constant confusing of matters of faith (that which the Bible actually teaches) with matters of opinion (conclusions drawn on the basis of insufficient evidence). This has especially caused us a great deal of alienation of brethren in the last quarter of this century. We have become so certain of our conclusions (often no more than mere opinion) that we believe that they are precisely what the Bible teaches. When someone reaches a different conclusion, we reject him as a false brother and a rejector of truth. As a Biblical example of this problem, look at the condemnation of Jesus by the Jews for healing a woman on the sabbath day (Luke 13:11-17). They based their conclusion (condemnation) upon the law which said: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." (Exodus 20:8-10.) The law was clear and simple: they were to do no work on the sabbath day. But in practical day-to-day living they often had to decide what was work and what was not. Generally this was understood by all, but there were times when a decision had to be made (e.g., how far could one walk before walking became work? And was it work to heal a sick person on the sabbath?). They were all agreed on what the Bible said, that work was prohibited, but they often differed with Jesus as to what work was. They thus confused their conclusions (opinions) drawn from the law with the law itself. It was right for them to bind the law (Jesus respected

that and kept it perfectly) but it was wrong for them to confuse their opinions with the law and give them the binding nature of law. Jesus did not differ with them over the law and what it said; He did differ with them on their definition of work. They had reached a wrong conclusion (and then confused their conclusion with the law), and Jesus said unto them in essence that it was not wrong (not work) to heal on the sabbath. There are scores of differences among us today caused by the same problem that characterized the Jews. We become so certain that our conclusions are correct that we conclude that they are precisely what the Bible teaches. We thus give them the same binding nature as the word of God itself. There is only one remedy for this disease (since we are all so fond of our opinions) and that is to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. It is a rare occasion that we differ over what the Bible says; our differences come over what each one of us thinks it means. And often there is a vast difference between what the Bible says and what we think it means.

As long as our differences are in the areas discussed here, we do not see them as divisive — we do not see them as serious enough over which to break fellowship. We can work together and still differ. But if our differences, either now or ever, are the result of a rejection of the truth as taught in divine revelation — things which God Himself has said in the Holy Scriptures — then we must part ways; our differences then would be of such serious nature that we could not work together. No people can live together or settle their differences unless they are agreed upon a standard of authority, a final court beyond which none can appeal. The Bible is that standard, and for the most part we are that people.

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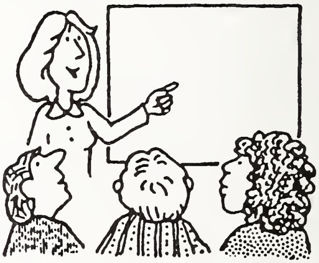

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"Clay in the Potter's Hand"

Bill Griffin, Spartanburg, SC

Jeremiah was known as the "weeping prophet" because his heart broke as he looked upon the sins of Israel. God had called him to preach and call Israel to repentence. He did the best he could but it seemed to him that all his efforts were in vain.

In Jeremiah 18:1-11 the Bible tells the story of the clay in the potter's hand. God wanted to teach Jeremiah a lesson so He sent him down to the potter's house. Jeremiah went in and watched the potter at his work. Jeremiah must have said to himself as he watched, "Oh, what a beautiful work!" But the potter frowned, "No, there is a flaw in it." The potter crushed the work in his hands, put the clay back on the wheel and made a pot that pleased and satisfied him.

Now here is the primary application and the lesson that Jeremiah learned. Israel had been chosen of God to be useful, but because of her sin she had failed God. God has the power to break her and make her over again, even as the potter broke the clay. But Israel did not repent and turn to God. The people continued in their sins and God sent them away into captivity.

Here is the personal application for today and now: (1) God has wonderful plans for our lives; (2) we mar these plans by our sin and selfishness; (3) God can make our lives over again.

Peter marred God's plan and denied Jesus three times. Yet, when he turned back to God, he became the preacher at Pentecost. John Mark departed early and left Paul on his journey, but God through the Holy Spirit used him to write a powerful gospel account of Jesus. Paul marred God's plan as Saul and tried to destroy the church of Christ. God made Paul a great peacher, apostle, teacher, and author of much of the New Testament. God can and does make us over again (Rom. 6:3-8).

God Has a Plan for Our Lives

God's plan is that we recognize Him as the Sovereign and Almighty God (Mark 12:28-30). We must love Him because He first loved us and gave His life for us. The fool says in His heart that there is no God (Ps. 14:1). We must believe that God is (Heb. 11:6). God wants us to look to Him.

It is God's plan for us to receive His Son as our personal Saviour. "Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) God's plan is that every man obey the gospel, that is His desire (John 3:16-17).

It is God's plan for us to live separated lives. We cannot live the same life after conversion as before or there is no conversion. Paul writing to Timothy stated: "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." (2 Tim. 4:10.) Demas did not stay converted because he did not separate himself from this present world. John writes, "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:15-16.)

It is God's plan for us to be loyal to His church. The word for church appears 114 times in the New Testament and 96 times it refers to the local congregation. We have an obligation to the local assembly and must not forsake the services of the local body of Christ (Heb. 10:25).

It is God's plan for us to live like Jesus. He is our great example. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (Matt. 16:24.) Jesus says, "follow me" and this means day by day. We must not just be attracted to Jesus, we must follow Him in all we do.

God's plan includes service to Him. When Jesus was tempted by Satan for forty days, the Evil One requested Him to worship him. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (John 4:8.)

God has heavenly plans for us. He has prepared a place for us. Jesus is there now building us a dwelling (John 14:1-4). But we must obey His commands (John 14:15).

We Often Mar God's Plan for Our Lives

We mar God's plan through sin. Adam and Eve marred God's plan and brought sin into the world. Human society has marred His plan with abortion, homosexual activity, divorce, and greed. Any man who lives for sin mars God's plan for his life. Even the failure to do good is sin (James 4:17) and sin separates from God (Isa. 59:1-2).

We mar God's plan through our disobedience. Saul in the Old Testament messed up a great plan that God had for his life. He let sin through disobedience rule. He could have been known as being a great king. But he disobeyed God, played the fool and came to a pathetic end. To resist God is always to rob ourselves.

We mar God's plan through covetousness. Luke's account of Judas serves as an example in Chapter 22. Judas sold our Lord for money. He lost sight of the greatness of Jesus and was blinded by a few pieces of silver. Do you know that a person can get so used to pinching pennies and making wades of dollar bills that he cannot hear God's voice (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

We mar God's plan by failure to do our best for Christ. Christ demands much, to him who much is given from him much is demanded. Paul said "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." (2 Tim. 4:7.) We must be able to stand with Paul and before God and say, "I accepted Jesus on His terms and did my best."

God Can Make Us Over Again

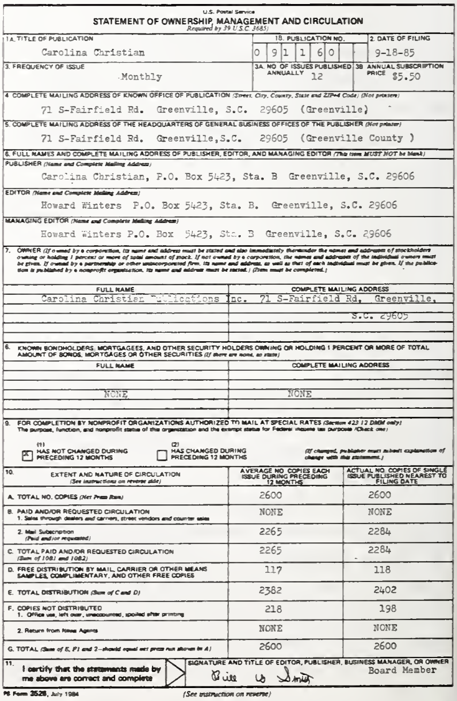
Although Jeremiah liked the first pot that was made by the potter, the master did not. He had to crush it first and remold it. A young man was heart broken when his bride-to-be died. In his sadness and sorrow he was made aware that the best friend anyone could every have is Jesus. This man wrote the song we sing so often, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." God made him over again to see that Jesus must be first in our lives.

According to Galatians 3:26-29, we are all children of God through our faith in Jesus Christ and by being baptized into Christ we become Christ's and heirs. God can make us over again if we will turn toward Him in obedient faith and remain there till we leave this world (Rev. 2:10).

One who has been buried with Jesus (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27) but has not remained faithful can turn back to Him as long as life dwells within. Simply by repenting and asking the church to pray for him (Acts 8).

Remember that God has a plan for our lives. We often mar God's plan but God can make us over again just as the potter remakes and remolds the clay.

* * *



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The Misery of Sin

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

"What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death." (Romans 6:21.) The Christian lives in constant awareness of the weakness of the flesh and the tendency to yield to sin. Indeed, many Christians even reach the point where sin again gains control, contrary to Paul's impassioned plea in Romans 6:12, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof." Paul was ever aware of that possibility of sin's lordship. Thus, in Romans 6:21 we find a stirring contrast between the misery of sin and the blessedness of righteousness. Lest we find ourselves slipping again toward the life that is ruled by sin, we need always to be reminded of the unprofitableness of such a life. There are three things here to keep in mind concerning the misery of sin.

First, sin yields no fruit. Paul asks in verse 21, "What fruit did you have in your former life under sin?" Every reader and listener of that original epistle knew the answer in his own heart. None. Sin yields nothing that is deserving of the name "fruit." To be sure, sin does make appealing promises and tells people what it will do for them, but it does not deliver. Therefore, Scripture speaks accurately of the "deceitfulness of sin." Instead of bearing fruit, sin bears only disappointment, despair, and pain. Sin makes us strangers to true enjoyment.

The misery of sin is further demonstrated in the fact that it is followed by shame. The Romans are reminded that their present view of their past sin is one of shame. In view of the righteous standards of the gospel, they had to be ashamed of the foolishness, the uncleanness, and the selfishness of their former lives. The sinful life brings with it the shame of discovery, the shame of guilt, the shame of defeat. Does not our own experience tell us this? It is possible that some sin without feeling any shame at all, but they will eventually feel an eternal shame, for Scripture tells us "they will awake to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan. 12:2.)

The final, and most fearful, truth concerning the unprofitableness of sin is that it leads to death, "for the end of those things is death." The greatest tragedy of sin is not its fruitlessness, nor even the shame it brings, but the spiritual and eternal misery that inevitable results. That sin leads to death is one of the most unshakeable certainties of the universe. The separation of the soul from the favor, presence, and Spirit of God is the only real promise of the life of transgression. With that in mind, the contrast of verse 22 seems most appealing, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life." Sin leads to death, sanctification leads to life. Only a fool would choose death over meaningful life. Unfortunately, there is no lack in the world for fools.

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"A Righteous Man Is Like a Tree Planted by the Water"

John D. White, Sr., Union SC

The Psalmist begins by describing the righteous person. As the Psalmist states it, the righteous man is like a tree planted by the water. Truly, he stands tall, he is rigidly fixed in the soil.

Please note that the righteous man is the blessed man of the first three verses of Psalm 1. Now, we will consider some descriptive thoughts concerning the righteous man.

1. **He is forgiven:** "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." (Ps. 32:1.)
2. **He is disciplined:** "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him of thy law." (Ps. 94:12.)
3. **He is obedient:** "Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart." (Ps. 119:2.)
4. **He is abiding:** "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee Selah." (Ps. 84:4.)
5. **He is describable:** He is known by what he isn't doing. He doesn't walk in the counsels of the ungodly. He doesn't stand in the way of the sinner. He doesn't sit in the seat of the scornful. Thus, he is careful of his association, his identification and his desires.

   He is known by his desires. He delights in the word. "Depart from me, ye evildoers, for I will keep the commandments of my God." (Ps. 119:115.) He continues in the word of God. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." (John 8:31.)
6. **His life-style or life's testimony is illustrated:** He is planted (Ps. 92:13). He is watered (John 7:37-39). He is fruitful (John 15:4). He is always green (Ps. 92:12). He is prosperous (Joshua 1:8).

All Christians should realize their state of blessedness while here on earth. Truly, they must be like trees planted by the waters. Indeed, what a wonderful blessing it is to be compared to a tree planted by the water. These are the heartiest trees of all. They are the ones we consider to be the best established, the healthiest, etc. Let us then be healthy, prosperous, happy, diligent and involved **Christians,** drinking from our fountain of life which is Jesus Christ our Savior.

"We Have Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ"

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

If you should ever feel down and out, dear Christian, please take the good time to read through Ephesians 1:1-14. It is beyond meditation to fathom the awesome treasure God has bestowed on us, but it sure does help you feel good to try.

Consider these blessings:

1 We are chosen for holiness and blamelessness in God's presence in love.

2. We are predestined by Jesus Christ to be adopted.

3. We are accepted by God in Jesus Christ through grace.

4. We are redeemed through Christ's blood.
5. We are forgiven according to His rich grace.
6. We have grace abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.
7. We have made known to us the mystery of God's will.
8. We are gathered together in one, in Christ.
9. We have obtained an inheritance in Christ.
10. We are to the praise of His glory.
11. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit, the guarantee of our inheritance.
12. Grace and peace are ours in Christ.

Beloved, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us! Remember these blessings are only in Christ (Gal. 3:26, 27). Let us who are in Christ be even more diligent to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:1-11).

Thoughts to Ponder

Lose Thyself for Jesus

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

Introduction: "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10:38-39.) "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:24-26.) "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And, whosoever shall exhalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exhalted." (Matt. 23: 11, 12.) "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35.) These Scriptures are most certainly modern language. We hear it quite often — someone will say to somebody else, "get lost." What do they mean — well, it has several connotations but they all tie together. It means, "be gone"; "get away from me; leave me alone," etc. Or, if a man will say, "I am going to lose myself doing thus or so," he is going to forget himself, his problems, his everyday situations. And so in our modern language Jesus says to us "get lost!" Get your mind off yourself, and yourself off your mind. Get away from preoccupation with self — preoccupied people are miserable people. Jesus does not teach pride — this is thinking too much of one's self. He does not teach false humility — this is thinking too little of one's self. What Jesus does teach is self-abandonment and self-forgetfulness. In Matt. 5:3 Jesus says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." To be poor in spirit is not self-debasement, but self-emptying and self-forgetting. And so Jesus says get your mind off yourself and yourself off your mind!

How does Jesus want us to lose ourselves? Three things come to mind; (1) Selfishness, (2) Self-Centeredness, and (3) Self-Consciousness. And you really cannot entirely separate the three. Let us consider these three things. **Selfishness.** Man wrapped up in himself makes a mighty small package. Selfish people are childish. Yes, even often repulsive. In my

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own case my greatest problem is me! Just about every situation brings an unconscious reaction, "How will this affect me?" What about you, are you any different? If you are different you are truly among the unusual. A teacher taught a great lesson to a class of small boys one Sunday on the parable of the "Good Samaritan." Afterwards she asked one little boy what he had learned. To her shock he answered: "When I have needs someone will come along and take care of me!" How true of man. And how tragic. Man almost always expects something for nothing. Man always wanting the world to revolve around him. Human personality defies logic — the more "on center" one becomes the more "off center" he is. Men who are insane are not out of their minds, conversely they are too much in their minds. Selfishness. Note the way we drive our cars; how we push ahead in store lines; how we demand preferential treatment; how our impatience replaces our patience; how we try to keep up with the Jones'; how we try to get ahead and stay ahead of our neighbor; how we want a finer and larger home; how we want a longer, heavier, and more luxurious car; how we want to live in a more prestigious neighborhood. Selfishness? You know it is. No one can harm us as much as we harm ourselves. Many cannot understand Jesus as He teaches self-denial. They wonder how they could sacrifice this, that, or something else. But Jesus does not teach "things denial," but rather He teaches "self denial." One can even sacrifice things without sacrificing self. You can give up earthly possessions but not be giving up self. When we solve the "self" problem, "things" too are solved.

The second thing Jesus wants us to lose is Self-Centeredness. Eve wished to be her own god. This is the essence of all sin — to dethrone God and enthrone self. We are told by experts that the largest written letter is "I" and the smallest is "U." We have the expression "The big I and little u." How true! Yet such sensitivity to self are miserable, suspicious, and suicidal tendencies. As a rule, people play games poorly when they are watched. Why? Because they are considering their own image rather than the game. To work well, to play well, to live well, man must totally submerge himself into it. To consider self is to "fumble the ball." Why do people not believe? Why will they not love? Because they are afraid if they believe too much they will be disapointed; and they are afraid if they love too deeply they will be hurt. Our ridiculous, ingrained, firmly entrenched pride. Our "Ego" (this is the "I" of self of a person). Oh, we must think something of ourselves — so we are not to degrade ourselves. But, we have to be careful or else our "ego" will be the downfall of us. We must watch to be sure we do not become an egotist — which is a self-centered and selfish person — a person who has the habit of valuing everything only in reference to his own personal interests — out and out pure self-centeredness. Perhaps a short humorous story will help us get the picture of an egotist somewhat better fixed in our minds. "A woodpecker was hammering away on an old hickory tree in the forest. He was making the bark fly when a bolt of lightening shattered the tree into splinters. The woodecker died thinking he had done it." Seemingly there is a temptation in man to get ahead, to be at the top, to stay at the head. We attend services in two cars. After services with whom do the children ride? With the car expected to arrive first, or course. So man bulldozes his way to the top. But happiness does not come that way. A story is told of a frog who lived up north. This frog was sad each fall when the geese flew south. He developed a clever scheme. He conned two geese into holding the two strings tightly in their bills. Then he clamped down firmly on the loose ends with his mouth. When they flew he would be carried. It worked. As they were flying south successfully, a farmer turned to watch. In amazement he shouted. "A frog is flying!" Upon closer inspection he saw the ruse. "How clever" he marveled, "Who brilliantly thought of that?" With instant pride the frog shouted, "I did, I did," whereon he immediately fell to his death. His "ego" got the best of him. Too many of us are akin to the frog — we open our mouths and thus kill ourselves. People who by choice live within themselves are invariably left to themselves with nothing but themselves. They become emptier and emptier, smaller and smaller. There is little left when it is only "self." The selfish man is a shrinking man. To exhalt self is to diminish self.

The third characteristic that Jesus wants us to rid ourselves from is Self-Consciousness. The world has long taught and practiced "know thyself." It has turned to astrology, philosophy, and psychology. All have failed because man was never made for too much introspection. Man can take apart but he cannot put back together. He knocks on the door but would run if the door were opened. Even David, a man after God's own heart, would not trust himself to introspecting. He penned in Psalm 139: 23, 24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." In a similar vein others suggest, "to thine own self be true." The thought sounds good, but the translation is poor. Rather it should read, "to thine own self be truthful." Man must be honest with himself. Otherwise, he "cuts away his nose" to spite his face. Man must never lose objectivity, honesty, and fairness. Yet, objectivity and introspection are different things. Paul says of introspection in Romans 7:23-25, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

The Bible teaches three things about self. (1) **Give thyself.** Giving men are living men. One wrote a book titled, **Try Giving Yourself Away.** What a profound thought! The solution to our miseries. Man cannot live within himself and his own little family circle and expect to please God, nor will he reach heaven in these circumstances. He must give himself to Christ and his fellowman. It is only by giving that we can expect to receive. Only by giving love do we receive love! Love is the one thing that the more we give the more we have. It is impossible to give yourself empty of love. (2) **Deny thyself.** Man must find that "someone" is larger than himself and devote himself to Him. To a Christian this Someone is Christ. We can never do enough for Christ to earn our way to salvation. (3) **Lose thyself.** Emerson well said, "See how the mass of men cautiously lower themselves into nameless graves when here and there an unselfish soul forgets himself into immortality." Jesus was great because Jesus gave. Mothers are happiest with their babies. Why? Because they forget themselves into happiness. Lose yourself in doing for others for therein ye may entertain Christ unaware. Jesus has said, "He that doeth these things for the least of these my brethren is doing them unto me."

Conclusion. The story is told that two men were walking across a bridge when in horror they watched a man plunge into the river in an apparent suicide attempt. The men ran anxiously from the bridge down to the river. The man had not drowned; he had swam to the bank to collapse in injury and exhaustion. The two men cried, "Where are you? Are you all right?" The exhausted man answered, "Here I am, but be careful and don't step on me!" How about that? A suicide attempt worried about being stepped on! And so Jesus says to each of us, "Lose thyself."

The Concept of Gentleness in the New Testament

Jerry Sprague, Raleigh, NC

The word "gentle" occurs several times in the New Testament in describing Christ, a Christian's attitude, or a Christian's behavior towards others. But just what is gentleness? Obviously, kindness is a part of gentleness but does it always mean being kind, e.g., in a case where a brother may need strong punishment. Paul tells Timothy to "gently instruct those who oppose him." (2 Tim. 2:25.) But at one time Paul opposed

Peter to his face (Gal. 2:11-14). Was Paul being gentle in this case? In Matthew 23, Jesus strongly admonished the Pharisees in words that can hardly be considered gentle, but rather appear harsh. How does this relate to the Christian today and his dealings with others? Is there ever a time to speak as Paul and Jesus spoke? If so, does that contradict 2 Timothy 2:25? To understand this, I believe it is necessary to examine the meaning and concept of "gentleness" in the Scripture and in particular 2 Timothy 2:25.

Vine's **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words** lists three Greek words which are often translated as "gentle" or "meek." **Epieikes, epios** and **prautes** are usually translated as "gentle" in the NIV and the NASV. The KJV usually translates **prautes** as "meekness." In the following paragraphs, I will discuss some of the passages in which these words occur.

Epieikes is translated as gentle, considerate, or forbearing. It is defined in Vines as "seemly, fitting, equitable, fair, moderate, forbearing, not insisting on the letter of the law; considerateness that looks humanely and reasonably at the facts of a case; equity, justice." This word seems to describe an action toward others. "Considerate" does seem to be a good way to translate it. Titus 3:2 and 1 Timothy 3:3 indicate the opposite of gentleness would be contentious and inconsiderate. In James 3:17, wisdom from above is described as "gentle" (NASV) or better translated as "considerate" (NIV). It is associated in the verse with peaceable, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits. This seems to fit Vine's definition — a quality of considering all the facts and human weakness and responding with mercy. In 1 Peter 2:18, the gentle (or considerate) master is contrasted with one who is unreasonable.

The word is translated "forbearing" (NASV) in Philippians 4:5 (gentleness, NIV). This verse also states, "The Lord is near" and verse 6 says not to be anxious. Many times, anxiety causes a person to be uptight, nervous, or short-tempered which leads to "ungentle" or inconsiderate responses in trying situations. Paul gives the key to dealing with the problem by telling us the Lord is near. The knowledge that He is near and that I can pray to Him regarding a situation should allow me to remain calm, able to respond in gentleness and considerateness to all people in all situations. Gentleness also implies a need for patience; for a virtue is not a virtue until it is truly tested. I cannot really show gentleness unless confronted with a situation that would try my patience, where I have the opportunity to respond harshly, ungently, contentiously, or inconsiderately.

The second word used is **epios** and is defined as mild, gentle — used by Greek writers to characterize a nurse with trying children. Paul uses the word in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, "But we proved to be **gentle** among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children." A key to understanding verse 7 is verse 6 where Paul says they were not "self-seeking" and wanting to assert their authority. If I am self-seeking, wanting glory from my peers, I'll probably be very impatient with immature people and perhaps want to assert my authority rather than be patient. Paul contrasts this wrong attitude in verse 6 with the right attitude in verse 7 by saying, "But we proved to be gentle among you as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children." This verse implies that some Christians are going to be immature and trying, like babes. Rather than becoming frustrated with them and responding ungently, judgmentally or argumentively, I should accept them where they are with great patience and gently deal with them. Often my tendency is to feel, "You should know better!" or "Stop acting like a child." Usually, these responses are out of frustration. Of course, a Christian cannot remain a child and at times the frustrations may be justified but my response should be one of control — explaining gently, yet firmly, the need to change.

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The same word is also used by Paul in writing to Timothy, "and the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but **gentle** [NIV], kind [NAS], to all, able to teach, patient when wronged." (2 Tim. 2:24.) In a situation with immature people, it would be easy to quarrel or put them down because of their immature attitudes, but Paul says "on the contrary," do not quarrel but patiently instruct or teach even if they wrong us. The ungentle and natural response when wronged is retaliation with verbal put-downs which is not effective; rather I should control my selfish impulses and **teach** them patiently.

A third word to consider in connection with the concept of gentleness is **prautes,** usually translated "meekness" in the KJV but "gentleness" in the NASV and the NIV. Vine states that it "consists not in a person's outward behavior only; not yet in his relations to his fellow man; rather it is an inwrought grace of the soul and the exercises of it are **first** and **chiefly** toward God. It is the temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good and therefore without disputing or resisting; closely related with humility (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12); opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; equanimity of spirit that is neither elated or cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all." Obviously, there is more to be conveyed here than can possibly be conveyed by the English word "gentle." I believe **epieikes** and **epios** are behaviors toward man but **prautes** is primarily a behavior or attitude toward God which results in **epieikes** or **epios** toward men. In other words, **prautes** is an inward quality (meekness) that leads to the outward quality of gentleness. I prefer the translation of "meekness" because it is hard to conceive of gentleness as describing my attitude toward God. It is more conceivable to be meek toward God rather than gentle toward God. Several things can make one deal harshly, unkind, or ungently with others, e.g., impatience, pride, low self-esteem, or insecurities. If someone does not do as I think they should as a Christian, I become impatient and react ungently. Thinking I know all the answers (pride) can make me short and unkind. Feeling threatened by another person (low self-esteem) causes me to react harshly or ungently or to retaliate. However, all of these ungentle actions are only symptoms of my lack of meekness toward God. Meekness toward God eliminates pride and low self-esteem. If I am meek toward God, I accept my environment, trials, temptations, and unpleasant situations as God's way of dealing with me and helping me grow (Heb. 12:7-11). I no longer see unpleasant situations and trying people as obstacles or threats but as "God-sends" from a loving, caring Father in order that I may have the peaceful fruits of righteousness (Heb. 12:11). Once I view my environment in relation to God, I no longer need to right it, be assertive towards it, or be threatened by it due to my insecurities. True meekness is neither thinking too much of self (pride) or too little of self (low self-esteem) but is forgetting self entirely and allowing God to do with us as He wishes.

Jesus is the ultimate example of meekness. Peter tells us that Jesus never did anything to deserve being attacked, beaten, humiliated, and crucified; however, He was (1 Pet. 2:22-23). And what was His response? Meekness (acceptance) towards God which manifested itself in gentleness towards men (1 Pet. 2:23). He did not strike back, threaten, or resort to name-calling. Yet He could have called down angels from heaven and wiped out His adversaries (Matt. 26:53). Why didn't He? Because He accepted His circumstances as being from God and "trusted himself to God who judges righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23). Jesus did not feel insecure, threatened, or prideful because He trusted God for the outcome. Therefore, He could always respond to people in a controlled and gentle way. Likewise, if I am meek towards God, I will not take attacks on me personally and I will not

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Clayton Pepper, Editor

retaliate. Peter tells us that we should patiently endure sufferings when we are attacked for righteousness sake (1 Pet. 2:18-24). When I am wronged I have no right responding harshly, retaliating, or being resentful toward the person, for in so doing I am playing God. Scripture teaches us that it is God's role to pay vengeance, not mine (Rom. 12:19). My harsh reaction is often an attempt at doing God's job in which I have no business meddling.

Now, let us consider some of the passages in which **prautes** occurs. In Matthew 5:5, it is translated "gentle" ("Blessed are the gentle") but "meek" in NIV. I prefer "meek" because that is more descriptive of a relationship with God while "gentle" is more an action toward people. It is also used in Matthew 11:29 where Jesus says, "For I am **meek** and humble in heart."

"Behold, your king is coming to you, gentle [meek] and mounted on a donkey." (Matt. 21:5.) Why is meekness associated with riding on a donkey? It was God's will for Jesus to ride on a donkey, a symbol of lowliness. Would it not be more fitting for a king to come in on a horse or, better yet, in a horse-drawn carriage? After all, the King of kings riding on a donkey is analagous to the President of the U.S. riding in a VW during his inauguratory parade. Because Jesus was meek towards God, He rode the donkey and accepted this as God's will. He did not rebel or act as though it were beneath His dignity. He was truly meek (empty of self).

Peter admonishes wives (1 Pet. 3:3-4) to have "the imperishable quality of a gentle [meek] and quiet spirit." Here I believe the word "meekness" is a better choice, suggesting an attitude of acceptance of God's will and self-control in reacting to trials.

In 2 Corinthians 10:1, we can see that meekness and gentleness are two separate qualities. Christ is said to be meek **(prautes)** and gentle **(epieikes).** The gentleness of Galatians 5:23 is also **prautes** or meekness.

Perhaps Galatians 6:1 should be translated "meekness" when Paul admonishes the spiritual to restore the sinful brother "in the spirit of gentleness [meekness], looking to yourselves, lest you too be tempted." The quality of gentleness would not necessarily make me look to myself, lest I be tempted, but meekness would because it describes my attitude towards God and if that is right, then I will be careful with the erring brother lest I, too, fall because of pride.

Now let us consider 2 Timothy 2:25 as I mentioned earlier. Paul tells Timothy to correct those who oppose him with gentleness **(prautes).** Again I believe meekness conveys the idea better than gentleness. Meekness toward God will keep me from acting out of pride or self-assertion but out of sincere love for the person who opposes me. Again, when opposed, I can react with retaliation, pride, or defensiveness as previously discussed, but, if I am meek toward God, I will act in a self-controlled way and in a way that is best for that person. Meekness will dictate that I want the best for that person.

In the previous verse (24), Paul tells Timothy to also be **epios** (kind, NIV; gentle, NASV). **Epios** implies the "nursing mother with trying children" concept. From the context of verse 24, **epios** is the opposite of "quarreling." So, in light of this passage, was Jesus acting **prautes** as in 2 Timothy 2:25 and at the same time, **epios** as in verse 24? There's no doubt He was considerate **(epieikes)** of the Pharisees and that He was meek **(prautes)** but was He gentle **(epios)?** Jesus' words in Matthew 23 would hardly be considered "nice" but even then, there was the element of **epios** in what He said. As He ends the discourse in verse 37, He says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,

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but you were unwilling!" This sounds very familiar to the **epios** in 1 Thessalonians 2:7. But even with the quality of **epios** a parent must at times correct and discipline the child and a loving parent will feel tenderness and a desire for a restored relationship with the child. And the child knows the parent will openly accept them back. And so it was with Jesus and the Pharisees. He had been trying to break through to them for three years but they were hardened. He desired a relationship with them (verse 37) but they refused. So, finally, He had to speak firmly and even harshly because they were so evil. But even as Jesus spoke those words, He had the attitude of **epios** and felt and hurt for them, and in actuality did the kindest thing possible.

The situation in Galatians 2 was another situation of great urgency. Because of Peter's hypocrisy, he was leading others astray and their souls were endangered. They were falling into the hypocrisy Jesus so vehemently condemned in Matthew 23 in the Pharisees. So, Paul reacted strongly when he "withstood Peter to his face" and, in reality, that was the "kindest" thing he could have done. And in the same way Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, Paul did so with Peter, in consideration **(epieikes)**, meekness **(prautes)**, and gentleness **(epios).**

In conclusion, gentleness and meekness are two separate qualities (2 Cor. 10:1) but are related. The meekness **(prautes)** that describes primarily our relationship with God results in **epieikes** and **epios.** And as Christians we must exhibit these qualities in our relationship with each other. However, there will be times when it becomes necessary to strongly admonish a brother with strong words. In that admonishment, we must exhibit considerateness **(epieikes)**, meekness **(prautes)**, and kindness or gentleness **(epios).** Though he may not consider it kind at the time, in reality it is the kindest thing that could be done for him.

Clairying the Difficulties Arising From Alleged Contradictions

(Part 3)

James L. Meadows, Memphis, TN

IV. Some Alleged Contradictions

1. **Gensis 22:1 vs. James 1:13 — Does God tempt man?** "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am." "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." Critics charge that these two verses contradict each other. **First,** such criticism arises from failure to understand that "tempt" carries more than one meaning. In James 1:2-12 "temptations" are used in the sense of trials or tests, but in James 1:13 a verbal form is used **(Peirazomenos**, present passive participle of **perirazo**, to solicit to do evil). **Second,** God does try men for the purpose of determining the genuinesness of their faith, but he does not solicit men to do evil. God tested, tried, proved Abraham; the American Standard Version renders Gen. 22:1, "God did prove Abraham. . . ."

2. **Genesis 33:19 vs Acts 7:16 — Did Jacob or Abraham buy the field?** "And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money." "And were carried over into Sychem ("Shechem," ASV) and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor ("Hamor," ASV) of Sychem." The critics charge that Stephen made a sad mistake, but the charge is false for several

reasons. **First,** Abraham bought a field, in which was located a cave, for the purpose of burying his dead (Gen. 23:3-20) — this transaction is not mentioned in Acts 7:16, nor is it referred to at all by Stephen. **Second,** it is obvious that Abraham bought **two** sepulchres, the second of which Stephen speaks, but which is not mentioned in Gensis. In all probability Abraham's second sepulchre stood in the very field which Jacob bought years later; for it appears that this field and Abraham's second sepulchre formerly belonged to the same owners. **Third,** Gensis 33:19 does not say that Jacob bought a **sepulchre,** but "a parcel of a field . . . of the children of Hamor." Joshua 24:32 confirms this to the letter, where we read that "the bones of Joseph were buried in Shechem, in a **parcel of ground** which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor." **Fourth,** "in the one hundred and eighty-five years which intervened, the Shechemites may have reoccupied the location, and Jacob may have renewed the purchase made by his grandfather."[12] **Fifth,** Stephen was standing before a group of men who were thirsting for his blood, and who knew most of the Old Testament by heart, but none of them detected an error in what he said (Acts 6:9-15).

3. **Genesis 46:26 vs. Acts 7:12-14 — Did seventy or seventy-five of Jacob's descendants go into Egypt?** "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls **were threescore and six** . . . all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were **threescore and ten.**" "Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, **threescore and fifteen souls.**" Is there a contradiction? First, the number **sixty-six** refers to those that came **out of Jacob's loins,** but does not include his sons' wives (Gen. 46:26), Jacob, Joseph (who was already in Egypt — Ex. 1:5), and Joseph's two sons (Gen. 46:27). **Second,** the number **seventy** refers to all who came out of Jacob's loins (Gen. 46:26) and includes Jacob, Joseph, and his two sons, according to genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5. **Third,** the number **seventy-five** refers to "all his kindred" (Acts 7:14), which would include the wives (evidently some of the wives were already dead), but would not include Jacob (they came with him), and Joseph, his wife and his two sons, who were already in Egypt (Ex. 1:5).

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4. **Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20 vs. Joshua 7:24; 2 Samuel 21:8-9. Children were not to be put to death, but children were put to death.** "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sins (Deut. 24:16; Cf. Eek. 18:20). David delivered seven sons of Saul unto the Gibeonites and ". . . they hanged them in the hill before the Lord: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest. . . ." (2 Samuel 21:9). What is the explanation? **First,** Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18:20 emphasize that God does not hold a son guilty of a sin committed by his father, but they do not say a son will never suffer the consequences of that sin. **Second,** Ezekiel 18:20 is part of the answer to a proverb (Ezek. 18:2) that implied that the sufferings of the Jews, at that time, were not in consequence of their own sins, but for the sins of their ancestors. Such a view is strongly refuted. **Third,** Exodus 20:5 states that God would visit ". . . the inidquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." "Of them that hate me" "Of them that hate me" indicates children who are sinful like their parents. **Fourth,** Joshua 7:24 is an example of some children suffering the consequence of the sins of their father, or an example of some children who knew of the deed (since Achan hid the stuff in his tent, Josh. 7:21), but kept quiet about it. **Fifth,** 2 Samuel 21:1 speaks of Saul's "bloody house," which may indicate that the sons of Saul were participants in his crime, or, it is even probable, that the sin was still being committed.

5. **Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 — How does one harmonize the names and the numbers? First,** there are at least twenty-seven differences in names, and at least twenty-three differences in numbers. **Second,** ". . . upon the hypothesis (1) that the same person bears several names; or (2) that several persons bear the same name;

or (3) that copyists have blundered in respect to names; or (4) that the terms 'father' and 'son,' etc., are used in a loose sense for 'progenitor,' 'descendant,' and the like, we are able to explain a large number of 'apparent contradictions.' "[13] **Third,** there was a marked resemblance of Hebrew letters to one another (such made it easy for copyists to make mistakes, "especially when the numbers were blurred or unskillfully written), and these letters were often used for numbers. In most cases the difference is probably due to copyists blunders. **Fourth,** these mistakes "touch no vital point of scripture. No precept, promise, or doctrine is in the least degree impaired by them; nor do they militate against any well-balanced theory of inspiration."[14]

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brother Winters:

I am thinking that my conversion story might help someone else who is in denominationalism. I was a devout Methodist for about five and a half years. I did all I was told to do to become a Christian. I tried to live right, read the Bible, pray at least once a day everyday. I held at one time or another every office in the Methodist Church except minister and Bishop. But in the course of time I changed jobs and began working with Odell Rhinehart of the Redland Church of Christ. As we talked and studied together I came to realize that my Methodist doctrine was lacking in the Scriptures. When I questioned the minister he always responded with fair words and smooth speech about what John Wesley believed about that particular thing or what the Methodist Church believed. He would never talk about the doctrine as it was taught in the Bible. Odell almost had me convinced to be a Christian, a member of the true church, but because of family and friends and what they would think, and because I still though I was a Christian, I moved my membership into the Missionary Baptist Church. This was a move in the right direction but it did not go far enough. The Baptist were more devout, it seemed, and I was trying to live a Christian life but it was not too long until false teaching became clear. . . . I realized there was too much wrong for it to be the church of the Bible. It was close in some areas but miles away in others. After spending seven and one-half years there and changing jobs again, I had also tried the Holiness. By this time I was almost down and out. But at last after I heard Dennis Conner on the radio a few times I decided I would give it one more try. Odell had done all he could to help, but it is hard to turn from family, friends, and what people think, especially after they had seen my life for many years and knew I was trying to be a Christian. After years of looking, listening, studying, I finally made up my own mind to lay aside all the so called Doctor's of Religion says and turn to the Bible alone. I then decided to do what Saul of Tarsus did in Acts 22:16. I thus turned from all the falseness I had observed and had been a part of (at least in the sense of supporting it). I have now been a member of the Lord's church in Yadkinville for over a year and I love it. Now I know salvation is more than feelings or what some false preacher says; it is the results of doing what the Bible teaches . . . and nothing else. — Tommy Rose, Yadkinville, NC

It is thrilling indeed to hear about one's quest for truth. How many others, like brother Rose, must be out there hungering and longing for truth, just waiting for us to bring it to them? How long, how long Oh Lord, will we sit idly by and wait for a more convenient season?

Dear Brother in Christ:

We want to thank you so much for the small magazine you continue to send us each month. It is one of the nicest magazines we have ever received. The articles inside have some of the best Bible teaching. . . . It is now getting very cold here in Zambia, and we have lots of people who have no clothing to cover themselves. We try to raise used clothing for those in need. If anyone there has used clothing you do not need the needy here would be so glad to receive it. — Douglas Birttell, Sibagia, Zambia, Africa.

We know nothing of this brother or his work, but if anyone would like to send used clothing to fill his needs, his address is: Church of Christ, P.O. Box 36355, Lusake, Zambia, Africa.

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

McCords to Be Honored

Henderson, Tenn. An appreciation dinner during the 50th annual Freed-Hardeman College Bible lectureship will honor Dr. and Mrs. Hugo McCord. The dinner is scheduled for February 3, with the lectureship continuing through February 7.

The McCords were both graduated from Freed-Hardeman College. Brother McCord is a retired professor of Bible and Biblical languages at Oklahoma Christian College. He was also an adjunct professor at Alabama Christian School of Religion. He is nationally known and respected as a preacher of the gospel.

It has also been announced that the theme of the 1986 lectureship will be "Ethics for Daily Living." The evening lectures will feature Basil Overton, Guy Woods, J.C. Bailey, and Billy Smith.

15th Anniversary for Great Commission School

Nashville, Tenn. The Great Commission School celebrated its fifteenth anniversary on September 23, 1985. The school was established in 1971 for the purpose of teaching the Bible with an emphasis on personal evangelism. There is no tuition for the school and features a two year program.

Office and classroom facilities are provided by the Wingate Church of Christ at no charge to the school. The Great Commission School has equipped many people for ministry and service who would not have had the opportunity otherwise.

Choates Invited to White House

J.C. Choate, pioneer missionary to India, and his wife, Betty, were invited to be present at the White House last June 12 for the welcoming of Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi of India. The invitation was the result of correspondence between sister Choate and the Prime Minister. Among those present were President Reagan and his wife, Nancy, and Vice-President George Bush and his wife.

Yugoslav Church Gets Building

Houston, Texas. Opportunities for the progress of the gospel continue to open up in iron curtain countries. The church in Zagreb, Yugoslavia was recently allowed for the first time to rent a place to gather for public worship. The building is located in the central business district of this city of over one million people, thus providing excellent exposure for the church.

And the Lord Added . . .

As a result of weekend evangelistic efforts by the staff and students of the Natal School of Preaching, over 700 people were baptized into Christ in South Africa during 1984. . . . The church in Zaire is growing rapidly, where there are approximately 50 preachers to serve 466 congregations. . . .In Manaus, Brazil, the church is growing at a rate of 60% per year. . . .Twelve were recently baptized in Haiti.

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Carolina Church News

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports directly to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. All correspondents should note that the Rock Hill Post Office Box has been discontinued. Items for publication must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte. Two additional elders have been appointed at Providence Road. A Christian school was opened September 3 at the Providence Road building. At the present time the school is for two through five years olds.

Kernersville. Two additional elders have been installed at the Linville Forest church.

Raleigh. Mike Dublin has resigned from the staff at Brooks Avenue.

Elizabethtown. Larry Cherry, Oklahoma City, has accepted the work with the Bladen church. It will be necessary, however, for outside support to be raised. Contact C.R. Franks, P.O. Box 1636, 28337.

Winston-Salem. David Pharr will preach in a gospel meeting at South Fork November 3-7.

N.C. Conversions

Burlington 2; Asheboro 1; Rockingham 3; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 5; Archdale, Charlotte, 1. Total: 12.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston. The Essex Village church has purchased adjoining property which will be developed into parking.

Union. The By-Pass Church reports nine baptisms since the end of July. This has come as a result of intersified efforts in home Bible studies.

S.C. Conversions

Northeast, Taylors, 3; By-Pass, Union, 6; Central, Spartanburg, 2; S. Pinckney, Union, 2; Essex Village, Charleston, 1; Winnsboro 1. Total: 15.

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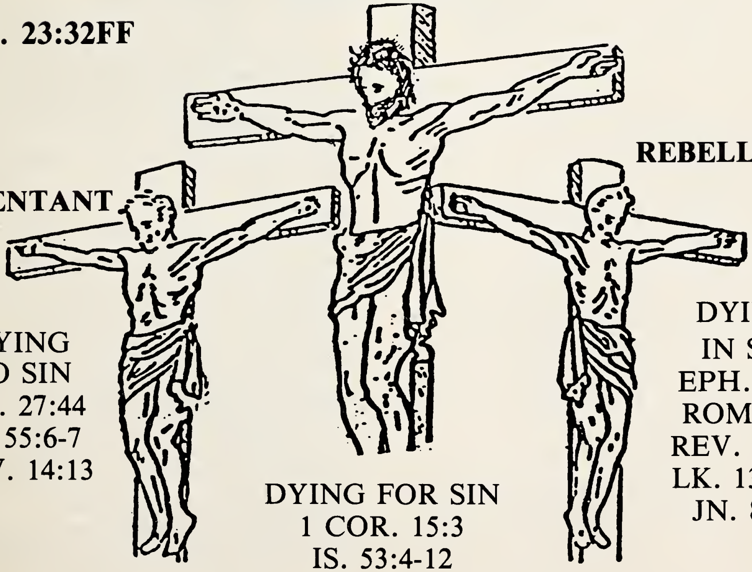
Three Crosses

LK. 23:32FF

REDEMPTIVE



REPENTANT

DYING
TO SIN
MT. 27:44
IS. 55:6-7
REV. 14:13

DYING FOR SIN
1 COR. 15:3
IS. 53:4-12

REBELLIOUS

DYING
IN SIN
EPH. 4:19
ROM. 2:5
REV. 9:20F
LK. 13:2FF
JN. 8:21

CRUCIFIED
WITH CHRIST
GAL. 2:20
ROM. 6:1-6

CRUCIFIED
WITHOUT
CHRIST
EPH. 2:12

David Pharr, See Page 5

editorial

Right-to-Life

Abortion is a moral crime — a crime against the unborn, a crime against the value of human life, a crime against everything that makes humans higher than mere animals.

Those who favor abortion (the wilful taking of innocent human life while it is still in the womb) have not, do not, and will not address the real issue. In fact, they cannot justify the killing of unborn babies without at the same time justifying someone taking their own life if it is their choice or if they get in the way of another. So they hide the real issue and make their case with a strawman. They say that a woman should have the right to control her own body. Against this, no one can offer a successful argument if it is put into proper context. But this totally and absolutely ignores the real issue in abortion. It is not whether a woman has a right to control her body but whether she (or anyone else) has a right to wilfully and without just cause destroy innocent human life (while it is still in the womb). Thus the abortion of an unborn child is not an issue of the right of a woman to control her body (as we see it she surrendered that right as far as the child was concerned when she mutually entered into the sex act with another that resulted in pregnancy) but the right to life of the unborn child. It is not the right of the mother but the life of the child that is at stake here.

Does a woman have a right to control her body if she chooses to take her own life? If not, then why argue that she has a right to control her body when it involves taking the life of another?

Would a woman have a right to control her own body if it involved employing another to literally cut her to pieces and dispose of the pieces by dumping them in a garbage bag? If not, then why argue that she has the right to control her body when it involves the employment of another (the doctor) to literally slice to pieces the body of another (the unborn) and dispose of the pieces as garbage?

Would a woman have the right to control her body if it involved hiring another to drench her in a chemical solution that would scald and poison her to death? If not, why argue that she has a right to control her body by hiring one to so drench another (the unborn) for the purpose of terminating its life?

In abortion, the issue is not the right of a woman to control her body but the right to life of the unborn child. When the issue is understood, abortion becomes an abominable crime, one that Christians have no choice but to oppose with all their might, whether by word, action, or ballot.

Scraps and Pieces

While cleaning off one corner of our desk some days ago (and we do do that occasionally!) we found some notes that we had made and editorials we had begun but never finished. Since the thrust of the items have long been forgotten and will never be finished, we pass the notes on to you with the hope that they might awaken some thought in your mind and heart as they did in ours originally

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

Howard Winters, Editor; David Pharr, Carolina News Editor; Dennis Conner, Brotherhood News Editor, Johnny Melton, Carolina Pulpit Editor.

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(and also let them serve as a reminder that thoughts, regardless of how good, unexpressed are soon forgotten — that unfinished work accomplishes no purposes):

The Bible

If we are not to follow the Bible in all things, how are we to know that we are to follow it in anything? How are we to determine that which is not to be followed and that which is to be followed? Who can say that it is authoritative and binding on one thing (such as faith) but not on other things (such as baptism, the church, and communion on the first day of the week)?

The Truth

Men often want the truth only if the truth is what they want it to be. If it does not fit their preconception, they reject it.

Where Faith Ends

Faith is the belief of testimony. Where testimony ends faith ends. But on the music question, testimony ends at singing. Therefore faith ends at singing. To go beyond singing (in worship) is to go beyond faith. Thus instrumental music in Christian worship goes beyond faith — that is, it is not an act of faith.

Opinions

One thing is certain: everyone has opinions, some good, some bad, and some in-between (perhaps neither good not bad). But regardless of their strength or weakness they are the private property of the one who holds them. They do not (or should not) effect the lives of others. Thus we conclude that on the whole opinions (especially ours) are good things, even though it is at times difficult to tolerate the unthinkable opinions of others (opinions that differ with our own). But they are good only when they are properly used. When they are removed from their proper sphere they often become evil. Thus we wish to warn against two follies pertaining to opinion: (1) Becoming so fond of them that we confuse them with the revealed will of God. The Bible and what it reveals is one thing and our opinion about it and what it reveals is another. Because we love our opinions and believe them to be the truth it is easy for us to confuse them with Biblical revelation. (2) Binding them on others in religious matters. This is done when they are confused with the law of God. One's opinions are somewhat like his shoes. They may fit and serve him well, but when forced on another's feet they squeeze them all out of shape. So it is with one's opinions: they may enrich his life and serve him well but when others are forced to structure their lives by them, they twist and distort and cause freedom in Christ to be lost. We need to learn them to keep our opinions to ourselves (as far as binding them on others is concerned).

Handling Opponents

"I have often found that the best way of fighting theological opponents — apart from a few brief flashes of lightening — is to let them be . . . and to go on quietly with one's own piece . . . since one only gives them an undesirable boost among readers and hearers by continually mounting explicit attacks." — Karl Barth, *Letters 1961-1968,* p. 153.

Riches

Wealth is not wrong within itself. In fact, it is a great blessing if acquired justly and used properly. When the Bible speaks of riches, wealth, or material things as wrong it always has in view their abuse not their proper possession or use. It is the love of money, not money itself, that is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10). From the very beginning God gave man the right to earn, accumulate, and possess worldly goods. When man sinned, after he was placed in the beautiful garden of Eden to dress and keep it, a part of the curse passed upon him was, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3:19.) In the sweat of his face, that is, by his work, man was to earn his bread. But work was also to have its rewards. The implication here is inescapable: once man had earned something in the sweat of his brow it was his. Hence the right to earn and possess material things has been God's law from the very beginning.

This principle was clearly recognized in the New Testament when the church was first established. Ananias and Sapphira were evidently charmed by the recognition given to Barnabas for selling his possessions and contributing all the proceeds to the immediate needs of the early Christians. They too had land. They sold it for a price and brought a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet, pretending that it was the total amount received in the transaction. However Peter rebuked them, saying, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" He then concluded, "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts 5:3, 4.) Peter recognized the fact that the land was theirs. And even after it was sold, the money received was theirs to dispose of as they wished. No one had forced them to sell it and no one had stipulated that all the purchase price had to be given. It was theirs to hold or sell, to keep or give. This clearly established the fact from both the Old and New Testaments that God recognized man's right to get, to accumulate, and to possess material things.

But that is not the end of the story. Each one must account to God as to how he uses his possessions. Man is a steward of all that God gives him, and it is required in stewards that they be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:2). Paul prescribed for those who have put off the old man and put on the new the proper plan of earning and sharing. "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Eph. 4:28.) Thus one has an obligation to earn so as to provide for himself and be able to give to those in need. That is, he is to earn and then properly use that which the Lord commits to his trust. When so used, riches are a blessing; otherwise they may prove to be a curse.

Miracles or Mirages?

We have just completed reading an old book called **Five Years in Christian Science,** by William W. Walter. It is filled with fantastic stories of mental and physical healings, not just of humans alone but also of trees and animals, that should put the Pentecostals of today to shame. We have never read of a Pentecostal, old or new, not even the nationally known ones, who could equal this man in his healing feats. The number is incredible and the cures stupendous and the author relates them all with a straight face. He is certain that his method works because his leader, not Christ but Mary Baker Eddy, had discovered the God Principle/Christ Truth secret of healing.

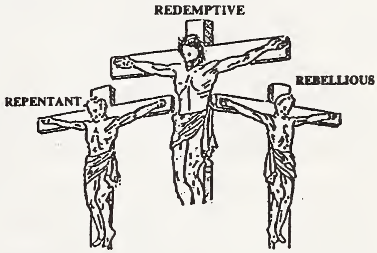
But the strange thing about this is that Christian Science claims to perform its "miracles" (precisely the same things as Pentecostals, except more of it and with less public fanfair) by convincing the sick that the body is material and that there is no sensation (feeling) in the material (e.g. a rock cannot feel pain). In fact, matter itself is an error of mortal mind. That is, in the words of Mrs. Eddy, "Mind is all; matter is naught." That is, matter is nothing, does not exist outside of mortal mind. Thus the body cannot be sick or feel pain because there is, in reality, no body to feel pain. Sickness and pain are thus only imaginations (errors) of the mind. Remove the error and you remove the sickness or pain.

On the other hand, Pentecostals claim to be doing their miracles by the power of God through faith — the faith of the individual. But Christian Science have no faith in Christ as the Pentecostals believe in Him. To Christian Science Christ is Truth and Truth is that mind is all and matter is naught. Yet Pentecostals claim that faith, strong faith, true faith, is necessary to the performance of miracles, healings or otherwise. They accredit all failures to a lack of faith. Christian Science claims to do far more stupendous things without faith (as the Pentecostals define it) than the Pentecostals do with faith. How do the Pentecostals account for this?

When they account for the wonders claimed by Christian Science on grounds other than the miraculous they will then have accounted for their own claims on the same natural grounds. If not, why not?

We do not profess to be able to explain everything that Christian Sciences or Pentecostals (or even Spiritualists, who make no profession usually of being in the Christian tradition) claim to do. The mind is a powerful instrument and it is obvious to any observer that it exerts more influence over the body than we are yet able to explain. But we do deny catagorically that what either does is miraculous. God works today, not miraculously but through His natural laws. God established His system by the miraculous, but He now works through the laws which He miraculously built into His system. This the Bible teaches by informing us that miracles would cease (1 Cor. 13:8-13), and the Bible is right, even when it runs counter to both Christian Science and Pentecostals. And since both run counter with the Bible, both are wrong and consequently what they are doing must be explained on the basis of something other than the miraculous — something other than God working through them directly or apart from His natural laws.

There is therefore no conclusion for us to reach but that both Christian Science and Pentecostals are performing mirages rather than miracles.



Three Men, Three Crosses

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

See chart on front cover.

Luke 23:32-43 tells of three man on three crosses. The center cross was **redemptive.** The right hand cross was **repentant.** The left hand cross was **rebellious.** The center cross was unique. No other man ever lived or died as did Jesus. The thieves on either side illustrate all the rest of responsible humanity.

The one on the center cross is the central theme of the gospel. He was **dying for sin** (1 Cor. 15:3). Every Christian should be familiar with the great texts, such as Isaiah 53:4-12, which tell of the passion of our Lord. Every sinner should long to know more of the sweet redemption story.

The repentant thief was **dying to sin.** Matthew tells how at first he had joined in the derision of Jesus (27:44). By his own admission he had lived in sin. But a change of heart was evident. Isaiah 55:6-7 sets forth the eternal principle of divine mercy toward penitent people. He had lived in sin, but he did not have to die in sin. While there was still time he had a change of heart. Jesus promised him paradise. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." (Rev. 14:13.)

The rebellious thief persisted in sin to the last. Every day of his life had afforded opportunity to change. But stubborness prevailed. Even his plea for help scorned the Savior (Luke 23:39). He would have been glad to have been saved from where he was, but he was not willing to be saved from who he was. Some people are "past feeling" (Eph. 4:19). Their days are treasuring up wrath (Rom. 2:5). Some people will not repent regardless of the warnings (Rev. 9:20-21). Thus this thief was **dying in sin.** Jesus explains plainly that those who die in sin can never join Him in heaven (John 8:21). The tragedy of the man on the third cross, indeed all other examples of people dying in sin, should warn the lost (Luke 13:2-5).

All responsible people are sinners (Rom. 3:23). All die and come to judgment (Heb. 9:27). The repentant thief represents those who are **crucified with Christ.** This means dying to the life of sin and living by faith (Gal. 2:20). In this gospel age it includes baptism into death that one might live in newness of life (Rom. 6:1-6).

The thief on the left was **crucified without Christ.** Crucifixion was probably the most painful death the Romans could devise. Still there are other death experiences that must be excruciating. The ultimate horror, however, the most dreadful of all deaths, is to die anywhere, at any time, in any manner, without Christ. For to be without Christ is to be without hope (Eph. 2:12).

The Beauty of Death

Don Nix, Union, SC

The title seems at first to be rather morbid and somewhat depressing, but let me assure that there is beauty in death.

In October as my family and I were planning a weekend vacation to the Great Smoky Mountain the idea came to me that I was going to see the beauty that was unfolding because the foliage was dying.

The wonderful array of colors was indeed a glorious sight. There were reds, oranges, yellows, golds and even the deep greens of the fir trees. The sun lit up various portions with its brightness as if God were saying, "Look at this spot." The wonder of God's creation was vivid with color. But the thought never left me that this beauty was caused by the leaves dying.

As I thought of the leaves being so beautiful in death, I thought of two other areas where death is beautiful.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross nearly 2000 years ago is beautiful to those who love (and those who will love) the Lord. It is in His death that the culmination of God's plans are brought to fulfillment. It was in His death that His blood was shed (John 19:34). His blood purchased the church (Acts 20:28) which is made up of those who have been redeemed by His blood. (Acts 2:47; Eph. 1:7; Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18; cf. Heb. 5:3; 9:14; 10:10; 1 Pet. 1:18-23). It was through death that He "destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil." (Heb. 2:14.) In His death He ushered in the Christian age regulated by the New Testament (Heb. 9:16). It is the giving of His body and blood that we are taught to observe as we gather around the Lord's Table each first day of the week (Acts 20:7; Mt. 26:26-27). The manifold beauty of His death is seen as a sad but glorious event by the child of God.

The death of the child of God is also a beautiful event. None of us like to lose our loved ones to death, but we know that eventually it will happen. It may be at a "ripe old age" or it could happen in our youth, or for that matter, anywhere in between. Life is short at best (James 4:13-14) and all of it should be used to prepare for death. As we packed our car to go on this trip to the mountains we were careful to carry everything we would need from home. We would not be able to return home for those items that were forgotten. As we journey through life toward death, we could have a beautiful trip by making sure we have all we need. We will need: (1) faith in God (Heb. 11:6); (2) to confess our faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32); (3) to repent of our sins as we begin the journey (Luke 13:3); (4) to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21); (5) to continue to live faithful to God and growing in grace and knowledge (1 John 1:7-10; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1:2-11); (6) and repenting of those sins that we commit along the way (Acts 8:21-22; 1 John 1:7-10). To those who have prepared adequately through faithful living, death opens the door to beauty beyond any earthly sight. Paul could say "it is far better" (Phil. 1:23) to depart and be with Christ. Just as the ancients of the past we "look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 10:11; cf. 10:13-16.) The death of the saint is the end of the race and the crowning of the successful participants (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

As beautiful as many things of this world are none can compare with the death of our Lord and the death of His faithful. Now is the time to make preparation for our greatest trip. Let us enjoy it together.

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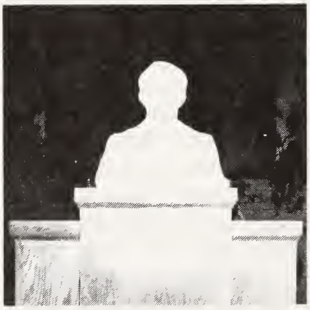
The Tragedy of Religious Error

L. Roger Powell, Waynesboro, VA

In several newspapers there has recently appeared a picture of Charles Prince of Canton, N.C. He appears to be about 40 years old. The picture was taken during a religious service in a Holiness church at a place called Sneedville, near Greenville, TN. In his right hand Mr. Prince is holding a real, live, gigantic rattlesnake. The article goes on to say that since the picture was made, Mr. Prince has died of snake bites and strychnine poisioning. His death was on August 19. Autopsy showed he had been bitten five times.

We must admire Mr. Prince's faith in God. He obviously believed sincerely that he could handle the rattler and drink the strychnine without suffering ill effects. It is in the Bible (Mark 16:17, 18), "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and, if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." We must also admire Mr. Prince for his consistency. There are many of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement who advocate miraculous healing, casting out devils, and speaking in tongues, but who would not for the world take up a rattlesnake, nor drink strychnine. Mr. Prince was consistent. He accepted, not just part of the passage, but all of it. If those today of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement believe that this is a teaching that pertains equally to all believers, why do they not follow the example of Mr. Prince?

The truth is, the power of Mark 16:17, 18 was the inspirational power of the direct movement and immediate presence of the Holy Spirit by which the inspired disciples of the first century received, proclaimed, wrote, and confirmed God's new covenant with the world. And, once the new covenant was fully revealed and confirmed, the



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miraculous power was suspended. There was a time in the early days of the church when the sick were miraculously healed; when devils were miraculously cast out; when the dead were miraculously restored to life; when one could communicate in an unlearned foreign language; when one could be bitten by a venomous serpent and suffer no ill effects. But when the law of liberty was perfected, the power of the miraculous was suspended. In 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 Paul wrote: "But whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am fully known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Unfortunately many people today are indifferent toward the teachings of Christ. They care nothing for doctrine. It is a serious matter, for with such an attitude the Pentecostal/Charismatic doctrines of John Wesley continue, and good folks like Charles Prince of Canton, N.C. die a tragic death, and many good people stand utterly confused.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.)

Faith Alone Is Not Enough

Sharon Blowers, West Jefferson, NC

(Editor's Note: *Sharon Blowers was baptized into Christ about a year ago. She has a hungry mind for truth and a strong desire to teach others. As the following will show, her mind absorbs truth as a sponge absorbs water. It was written originally, not for publication here, but as an effort to teach one close to her that faith alone is not enough to produce salvation from past sins nor to take a Christian to heaven. We think you will profit by a close reading of it. — HW.)*

Before a person can believe in another's idea or concept he must first hear (or be informed) about it. When he hears he can then choose to believe it or reject it. Paul says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17.) If you have heard the words of the New Testament and believe them to be the inspired testimony of the Lord, you believe the gospel (Acts 15:7).

But we are told in the New Testament that those who believe the gospel are to obey it (Rom. 6:16-18; 10:16), and that God will take eternal vengence upon all those who do not (2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:8). The devils themselves believed and trembled (James 2:19) but they are not saved (James 2:19-26). It should be obvious from this that even though a person hears, comprehends, and believes the gospel he is not saved until he obeys it. Or as the Bible puts it, Christ is the author of salvation unto all them that obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9), and some fail to enter because of disobedience (Heb. 4:6, RSV).

What exactly are we to obey? We are to obey the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7). What is the gospel? It is the good news that Christ died, was buried, and rose again for our salvation (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The good news then is God's means of saving us through the gospel (the plan of salvation). The gospel is thus God's power to save (Rom. 1:16) and the gospel is the word of God (1 Pet. 1:25).

We read about the life of Christ in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Mark opens his book by saying, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (Mark 1:1.) This shows that all which follows is the gospel. What follows is all of Christ's teaching (John 20:30-31). It is the teaching of faith, repentance, confession, baptism, obedience, love, and hope. We obey the gospel when we follow the Lord's instructions in all of these teachings. If we remove any one of them, the plan is incomplete and we are condemned (Rev. 22:18-19).

Suppose then that one has heard and believed the gospel and wishes to obey it, what is he to do?

From the time Christ began to preach, He preached repentance (Matt. 4:17). True repentance leads one to salvation (2 Cor. 7:9-10). This means that we must be truly sorry for our sins and determine to change our way, walk in newness of life, and remain free from sin (Eph. 4:22-24). Before we can be free from sin we must have forgiveness, and Peter tells us to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.) Saul was told to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) Baptism puts us into Christ (Rom 6:3; Gal. 3:27) where we become new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17). Furthermore, baptism puts us into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4) from which we are raised with Him into a new life (this requires a complete burial, an immersion, to picture both the death and resurrection of Christ). In being raised with Him we are a new person (Eph. 4:22-24), having put off the old man and put on the new. This gives us a new start in life — the new life in the Spirit (see also Col. 2:12-13).

Jesus tells us that we must be born anew before we can see the kingdom of God (John 3:5). He then adds that unless we are born of the water and of the Spirit we cannot enter into the kingdom (John 3:5). This is further explained by Paul when he says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5.) We must thus willingly die to sin, be buried with Christ in baptism, and arise to walk in the new life of the Spirit as revealed to us in the word of God. We are told to walk according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:4-6). "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14.) To be sons of God it is necessary to walk by the Spirit of God. This requires more than faith alone.

Peter says, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us. . . ." (1 Pet. 3:21.) But even after we are saved, we must continue our obedience. Paul said, "Work out your own salvation." (Phil. 2:12.) We continue to be accountable for all our actions (Rom. 14:12.) Now if salvation is something that must continue to be worked out by the Christian, believing alone cannot be enough. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) The will of the Father is revealed to us in the words of Jesus (Heb. 1:1-4), which He gave to us through the apostles who were directed by the Holy Spirit. These words are given to us by inspiration in the gospel — the apostles wrote what they saw and heard. It follows therefore that the teaching of the apostles is the word of God. The will of God must be followed, but that will (word) contains more than faith. Thus faith alone is not enough.

But there is more: we must take heed lest we fall (1 Cor. 10:12). The fact that we can fall is supported by all the following Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 9:27; 1 John 2:24; Hebrews 10:26, 29; 2 Peter 2:20-21 and many more. In Matthew 13:41-42, we are told that the Son of man will send His angels and they will gather the evil doers out of His kingdom. Those gathered out will be thrown into the furnace of fire. Only those who have believed and obeyed the gospel are in His kingdom. Yet the evil doers will be taken out. We can thus see that even though one has believed and been baptized, he must continue to walk in newness of life and hold fast his profession (Heb. 3:14) firm unto the end or he cannot enter heaven. This shows conclusively that more than faith is necessary.

Our commitment to Christ and His teaching is a lifelong commitment. It begins when we believingly hear the word and ends in eternal life, with a life of faith and obedience filling all in between.

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"Thriving in Samaria"

B.J. Barr, Sumter, SC

When Jesus was enroute to Galilee from Judea, he thought it was necessary to go through Samaria. To any orthodox Jew such a decision was unheard of. Regardless to the traditions, Jesus saw the need of going through this forbidden area. Five years ago I shared with you that it was time to go through Samaria. Areas here in South Carolina where the true gospel message had never been heard. Communities where people are responding and are hungry for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many towns and cities that have been overlooked for various reasons.

When persecution came against the church the disciples "were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria." (Acts 8:1.) Phillip was among them that were scattered. He went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed Christ. As he preached the word, he got results.

We are no longer making plans to go through Samaria. We are now "in Samaria" and doing well! Let me share with you what the Lord has done in our Samaria within the past five years.

My family and I moved here in July of 1980 informed by Carl Hogue then minister of the Plaza church here in Sumter. There was a call to minister to the needs of the Black community in this area. We worked, made plans, solicited support, and prayed for the growth of the work. Many people were instrumental in this effort. Brother Rocky Hoover and I traveled to tell the story of the need here. In the Fall of 1981 we began to build. In the Spring of 1982 the Kingsbury church was established with about 40 members. By the Fall of 1984 our Sunday attendance was about 120. We had baptised over 50 by this time. Our retention rate is about 85%. Kingsbury is a predominately Black congregation with the intent of reaching out to every community within a 50-mile radius that has no church. In October of 1984 George Carlisle who was working with me here in Sumter moved to the next county to establish another work. In our teaching outreach, several people were converted in the Manning area. Along with other members of the Kingsbury church, brother Carlisle is now spreading the good news of Christ in that community.

In July of 1985, the church was established in Lake City, S.C. This was a joint effort by 13 congregations here. On Saturday, July 13th, the mission team arrived in Lake City. The tent was erected, and the community canvassed. A two weeks meeting was held with daily Bible studies, counseling, door knocking, and baptizing believers. The results were 23 souls added to the body. There were 62 Bible classes set up. On Sunday, July 21st, the new congregation met with 35 in attendance. The community received us well. Many people showed a desire to learn the truth about God's way.

In five years three churches have been established that we are connected with. I am happy to report that two others have also started in nearby Orangeburg and Eastover, S.C. Without doubt, the harvest is plenteous.

In our section of the state there are many Black people who live in rural areas. A congregation must be built up well numerically before it can become self-supporting. This is why we need so badly the aid of fellow Christians. When I shared our plans to go through Samaria, many of you responded. This time we are not basing our plea on future plans, but present results. This appeal, brethren, comes from the heart of Christians in this area. The people need the gospel just like you. Let us not let indifferences of the past cause so many to be lost. I beg you to open your hearts and give this part of Black America a chance to hear the Bible as it is.

The time is right. People are fed up with the foolishness of so many denominations. Do not allow the Jehovah Witnesses and Adventists to confuse the minds of these people even more before we get to them. The longer we procrastinate, the more difficult it will be to unteach innocent hearts.

The good news is, we are in Samaria and doing well! Help us to continue to be successful. Remember one person can make a difference. Will YOU help to conquer Samaria??

For more information contact the following: B.J. Barr, 12 E. Charlotte Ave., Sumter, S.C. 29150; Plaza Church of Christ, c/o Rocky Hoover, P.O. Box 1385, Sumter, S.C. 29150; Red Bank Church of Christ, c/o Robert Taylor, 3600 Dayton Blvd., Chattanooga, Tenn. 37415; Jacksonville Road Church of Christ, c/o Frank McElveen, 2026 Jacksonville Road, Charleston, S.C. 29405; East Tenn. School of Preaching & Missions, c/o John Waddey, 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, Tenn. 37931.

A Good Commentary on Romans

Perry B. Cotham, Grand Prairie, TX

The Book of Romans, so rich in great truths teaching salvation by the grace of God through obedient faith in Christ Jesus, to both Jews and Gentiles alike, has long been considered by Biblical scholars as one of Paul's most difficult letters to understand. Many commentaries have been written on the book.

Brother Howard Winters has recently published a good commentary on Romans; it is written in plain, simple language, brief enough for the average member of the church to study, and is sound in teaching. I commend him for this labor of love to the brotherhood and recommend that you buy a copy and read it. Order your copy today from the **Carolina Christian,** P.O. Box 5423, Sta. B., Greenville, SC 29606

God's Secret Service

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

The essence of Christ's kingdom is secret service. The invisible visit, the behind-the-scenes sacrifices, the uncongratulated giving and countless other thoughts and deeds are those upon which Christ's church is daily sustained.

Secret service is true, is pure; it is service in its highest and noblest form! It is the type of service that keeps the servant humble and serving for the right reason because secret service is done for the praise of God, not man.

Jesus is the greatest example of secret service. We can see this when we remember that but a smattering of Christ's deeds have been recorded for us (Jn. 21:25) with the rest shrouded under the veil of secret service. Furthermore, Christ's ultimate deed of service — the giving His life, was done for all — and yet many will never acknowledge or appreciate it.

Are you a secret servant? If so, don't let man's lack of acknowledgement and appreciation for your service become a source of discouragement to you. Remember, secret service keeps our motivation pure (Matt. 6:1), it yields the right reward (6:4) and it represents following after Jesus in the truest sense (1 Pet. 2:21ff). Secret service is no secret to God!

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Clairying the Difficulties Arising From Alleged Contradictions

(Part 4)

James L. Meadows, Memphis, TN

(6) **1 Samuel 16:22 vs. 1 Samuel 17:56** — "And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight." "And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is." How does one explain Saul knowing David and Saul not knowing David? **First,** there may have been a considerable lapse of time between the events recorded, and David's physical appearance may have changed considerably. **Second,** Saul's "half-mad state" (some say his "diseased mental state"), at times, may have caused him to forget David, which often happens. **Third,** the "bustle of war and court life, with the multiplicity of Saul's servants and attendants, may have caused forgetfulness."[15] **Fourth,** Saul's question may indicate ignorance of David's family and his background, not David himself. **Fifth,** 1 Samuel 17:15 implies that David did not remain with Saul all the time, but returned home to tend the sheep, and then back to Saul when needed. Even though 1 Samuel 16:21 states that David became Saul's armorbearer, this probably did not take place until after he had proven himself in battle with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1-50).

(7) **2 Samuel 24:1 vs. 1 Chronicles 21:1 — Who moved David to number the people?** "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah" (2 Samuel 24:1). "And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel" (1 Chronicles 21:1). 2 Samuel 24:1 pictures God as inciting the king to number the people, whereas, according to 1 Chronicles 21:1 Satan is responsible. The critics charge a contradiction. **First,** both texts show an aspect of the truth. Satan and the Lord were both involved. Job was attacked by Satan with the express permission of God (Job 1:12; 2:6) and Saul was troubled by ". . . an evil spirit from the Lord" (1 Sam. 16:14). "It is consistent with Hebrew modes of thought that whatever occurs in the world, under the overruling providence of God, — whatever he **suffers** to take place, — should be attributed to his agency."[16] **Second,** since God does not tempt (solicit to do evil (James 1:13-15), and since David was tempted to do evil, then Satan was the one that led him to commit sin (2 Samuel 24:10). The margin of KJV has "Satan" in 2 Samuel 24:1.

(8) **Genesis 32:30 vs. John 1:18** — "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten, Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Is there a contradiction? **First,** "face to face" does not mean, unless the context demands it, that an individual literally sees God. God's revelation to Israel at Mt. Sinai was called "face to face" (Deut. 5:4-5), even though Israel did not see God in reality (Cf. Ex. 19:20-24; 20:18-21). God's nearness to the children of Israel, in contrast to His relation to other nations, is called "face to face" (Num. 14:14). The Lord spake "unto Moses face to face" (Ex. 33:11), yet Moses did not literally see God's face (Ex. 33:19-20). It meant a clearness and fullness of revelation to Moses, beyond that given to the other prophets (Num. 12:2-8). A partial revelation is called seeing "face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12b). **Second,** when Jesus said that "no man hath seen God," He meant that He had never been as fully and clearly revealed as He was about to declare Him. Jesus later said, ". . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father . . ." (John 14:9). **Third,** Jacob saw God through the angel that was God's representation.

(9) 2 Samuel 24:9 vs. 1 Chronicles 21:5 — "And Joab gave up the sum of the people unto the king: and there was in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the

sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men." "And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and hundred thousand that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand that drew sword." How does one explain the difference in the numbers? **First,** it could be an error of the copyists in one or both cases. **Second,** in 1 Chronicles 21:5 mention is made of the tribes of Benjamin and Levi. "Although this fact is mentioned in this place, where the number given is the larger one, it should be considered in the account in 2 Samuel, where the smaller number is given. It seems that Joab obeyed the king's order in the main, but finally became provoked at the whole project, and left off two tribes in his return. The larger account included all the tribes; but when he came to deliver the report to David, he gave the number, less those of the two tribes."[17] **Third,** Collet states that Chronicle gives emphasis to "**all** Israel were 1,100,000"; while Samuel selects only the warriors, and states that "there were in Israel 800,000 **valiant** men. He further states that Samuel emphasizes "**all** the men of Judah were 500,000"; while Chronicles merely mentions the men that **drew the sword** as being 470,000, implying there were some who did not draw the sword.

(10) **1 Samuel 15:29 vs. Genesis 6:6** — "And also the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent." "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." How can God repent, yet not repent? **First,** Jeremiah 18:7-10 is a very explicit statement of God's plan or **rule of conduct** in dealing with men: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, **I will repent** of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at that instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then **I will repent** of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." **Second,** man repents because he needs to change his mind about sin and to change his life. God does not repent, in this sense, because "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the Son of man, that he should repent . . ." (Num. 23:19). **Third,** repentance basically involves a **change.** This does not mean a change in God — "His attitude toward goodness and the good on the other, is the same yesterday, today, and forever. It is precisely **because God is immutable,** that His relation to men, and His treatment of them vary with the changes in their character and conduct. In a word, **He changes because He is unchangeable.**"[18] When Israel sinned at Mt. Sinai, God willed that they be destroyed, but when Israel turned from their evil way God repented, i.e., He willed that the decree to destroy the people be **changed** so that they not be destroyed (Ex. 32:1-14). God made Saul king of Israel, but when Saul became disobedient, God said, "it repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king . . ." (1 Sam. 15:11). God decreed that the kingdom be taken from Saul (1 Sam. 15:24-28). In this context it is said that the "Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent . . .," i.e., He was not going to will a change in His decree.

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Book Reviews

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

Battle Plan: A Handbook for Jail/Prison Ministry, Rick Watson; order from Box 750064, Duncan, OK 73575; paper, 148 pages, $3.95.

The author is presently an inmate of the Federal Correctional Institution near El Reno, Oklahoma and was when he wrote this book. It contains a record of the beginning of the Lord's church in the institution and makes reference to congregations existing in penal institutions in Texas, West Virginia, Tennessee, and the Ohio Valley. Primarily, it is a resource and handbook for beginning and maintaining congregations of the Lord's church in both state and federal prisons, a relatively new ministry for the Lord's people but an old mission field. It is a practical book that deals with the legal aspects, ministerial aspects, the prisoner and their families. It explains how to begin preaching the gospel to this mission field and how to maintain and nourish the church once a congregation is established within those closed walls. The author states that as of May, 1985, there were 136 souls added to the Lord's church after their imprisonment in the El Reno facility. Of that congregation, 51 have been released to make a total membership of 187. This book is recommended for any who are interested in reaching into this field of lost souls.

I Love Me, I Love Me Not . . . Rosemary Whittle McKnight; Book and School Supply, P.O. Box 17999, Montgomery AL 36117; paper, 114 pages, $4.75.

This is a study of the Christian woman's self-esteem from a Biblical perspective and is written for a ladies Bible class of private study. The 13 lessons are divided into two parts: self-esteem destroyers and self-esteem builders. It is based on the belief that self-esteem is a woman's feelings of security significance, and competance. The author believes that sin takes these away but Christ gives them back. She believes that this is important to God. The book is built on the premise that a good relationship with God is the source of one feeling good about his worth as a person and value as an individual. Though written for the ladies, note that the principles are applicable to all also.

The Work of a Preacher, Barry Cunningham; Bible and School Supply, P.O. Box 17999, Montgomery, AL 36193; paper, 139 pages, $5.95.

A collection of articles from the **Words of Truth** a publication begun by Gus Nichols in 1964 and is presently edited by Flavil Nichols. From hundreds of issues that were reviewed, Barry Cunningham complied 72 articles dealing with the preacher and his work. You will find excellent material from such men as John Waddey, Robert Taylor, Franklin Camp, Bobby Duncan, Gus Nichols, and Dub McClish. They cover such areas as the preacher's work, the preacher/congregation relationship, motivation, attitudes, feelings, family, and salaries. They deal with the problems in the work and problem preachers, preaching to the lost and preaching to the saved. This book is motivating and humbling. It will help to encourage preachers and it will help the church to better understand them and their work.

Mrs. Preacher, Karen Northeim; College Press Publishing Company, Inc., PO Box 1132, Joplin, MO, 64802; 139 pages, paper $3.95.

This book is subtitled "Succeeding as a Minister's Wife" and is written for both those in the parsonage and the pews. The author has had over 20 years experience as a preacher's wife and 24 years experience as a mother of three children. She also writes observation, involvement, and survey information concerning preacher's wives. How can the minister's wife be more effective? How can church people encourage their minister's wife? What do counselors cite as the reasons why minister's marriages have and are in trouble? These are some questions this book deals with. Some of the subjects covered are public image, living with the preacher, expectations, criticism, family attention, friendships within the local congregation, "salary worthy of the servant," and the parsonage. It is directed to the preacher's wife, and so deals with those things of vital need and importance to her. We believe that it will then help the preacher's wife, the preacher, and even the congregation to better understand the preacher's wife, her needs, and her relationship to you! We highly recommend that every congregation buy it for their library and that every member make the time to seriously read it: that every minister purchase it, seriously read it, then lovingly give it to his wife; that every minister's wife seriously meditate on this book's message. Preacher's wives are a misunderstood group by those who need to understand her the most, her husband and the church. We believe this book will help. Read it well!

The Beginning of Our Confidence, David Pharr; Bible and School Supply, P.O. Box 17999, Montgomery, AL, 36117; paper, 72 pages, $5.95.

The author is a widely respected and loved gospel preacher in the Carolinas. This book is a seven-week series of daily Bible study lessons for the new Christians. It is designed to meet the needs of understanding, encouragement, and motivation as the new Christian seeks to develop in his new life and adjust to its necessary changes. The purpose, then, is to develop the daily Bible study habit and teach on subjects vital to their lives. The 49 lessons cover a variety of subjects in the areas of the church, the Christian's life, and the Bible. Some of the lessons are: "Be On Your Guard," "What Will Others Think?," "Tools for Study," "The Church and Other Denominations," "An Appointment Every Week," "What About Tobacco?" "Wonderful Assurances," "The Ultimate Tragedy." Each lesson is challenging and encouraging, honest and loving, direct and thought provoking in its approach. There is one lesson to a page and one lesson per day. Of course, the reader may want to spend more time on a lesson. This book is excellent material! We recommend that every congregation provide a copy for all of its new Christians and encourage them to use it to develop their Bible study. Every thought is supported by Scripture and good sense! Excellent material to help congregational growth by helping individual growth!

Backfire

Letters to the Editor

Brother Winters:

I am thinking that my conversion story might help someone else who is in denominationalism. I was a devout Methodist for about five and a half years. I did all I was told to do to be a Christian. I tried to live right, read the Bible, pray at least once a day everyday. I held at one time or another every office in the Methodist Church except minister and Bishop. But in the course of time I changed jobs and began working with Odell Rhinehart of the Redland church of Christ. As we talked and studied together I came to realize that my Methodist doctrine was lacking in the Scriptures. When I questioned the minister he always responded with fair words and smooth speech about what John Wesley believed about that particular thing or what the Methodist Church believed. He would never talk about the doctrine as it was taught in the Bible. Odell almost had me convinced to be a Christian, a member of the true church, but because of family and friends and what they would think, and because I still though I was a Christian, I moved my membership into the Missionary Baptist Church. This was a move in the right direction but it did not go far enough. The Baptist were more devout, it seemed, and I was trying to live a Christian life but it was not too long until false teaching became clear. . . . I realized there was too much wrong for it to be the church of the Bible. It was close in some areas but miles away in others. After spending seven and one-half years there and changing jobs again, I had also tried the Holiness. By this time I was almost down and out. But at last after I heard Dennis Conner on the radio a few times I decided I would give it one more try. Odell had done all he could to help, but it is hard to turn from family, friends, and what people think, especially after they had seen my life for many years and knew I was trying to be a Christian. After years of looking, listening, studying, I finally made up my own mind to lay aside all the so-called Doctor's of Religion says and turn to the Bible alone. I then decided to do what Saul of Tarsus did in Acts 22:16. I thus turned from all the falseness I had observed and had been a part of (at least in the sense of supporting it). I have now been a member of the Lord's church in Yadkinville for over a year and I love it. Now I know salvation is more than feelings or what some false preacher says; it is the results of doing what the Bible teaches . . . and nothing else. — Tommy Rose, Yadkinville, NC

It is thrilling indeed to hear about one's quest for truth. How many others, like brother Rose, must be out there hungering and longing for truth, just waiting for us to bring it to them? How long, how long oh Lord, will we sit idly by and wait for a more convenient season?

Dear brother Howard:

I read the letter to you from Jim Thompson. . . . I too am greatly disturbed by the 1.5 million abortions in the United States each year. It would be wonderful if we could join an effective organization from which to battle this issue. I am for it! However, may I most humbly ask a question: "Do we have the cart before the horse?"

Men becoming saints while inside this prison have now been instrumental in establishing seven new congregations. So instead of joining stop-gap organizations to fight abortion why do we not convert so many to our Lord that far less people will feel that abortion is correct or morally lawful? One cannot legislate morality. If that were possible I would not be in this prison for robbing banks!

Let us go in among the dirty, the poor, the downtrodden and convert them to Christ. Take it from an eyewitness the effects the gospel has had on convicts in the largest federal prison in the United States. Soul winning has changed the society in which we live and believe me these changes are for the better! There has not been a single murder nor a riot in this prison for five years. To see these results become a reality here and elsewhere we **must** minister to those who most need a physician. Christ found few affluent and attractive people to be converted. We will certainly find the going no easier today. Christ went to the lost. We must do the same, searching them out in every conceivable place. — Rick Watson, Federal Prison, El Reno, OK

Here is a man, deprived of the freedom most of us enjoy, doing a marvelous work — he is serving where he is with what he has and God is graciously blessing his work. But his letter seems to imply an either/or situation: we must either join a stop-gap organization or we must reach the lost, wherever they may be found. But why either/or? Why not do both? We have the time, the resources, and the manpower. But we have another tremendous advantage: We have the truth. All that is needed now is the devotion and the commitment to get the job done.

Dear Brother in Christ:

We want to thank you so much for the small magazine you continue to send us each month. It is one of the nicest magazines we have ever received. The articles inside have some of the best Bible teaching . . . It is now getting very cold here in Zambia, and we have lots of people who have no clothing to cover themselves. We try to raise used clothing for those in need. If anyone there has used clothing you do not need, the needy here would be so glad to receive it. — Douglas Birttell, Sibagia, Zambia, Africa.

We know nothing of this brother or his work, but if anyone would like to send used clothing to fill his needs, his address is: Church of Christ, P.O. Box 36355, Lusaka, Zambia, Africa.

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Ethiopian Relief

Stockton, Calif. Brother John Clark reports in the "Ethiopian Mission Report" newsletter that Christians in Ethiopia are now distributing food to more than 45,000. As a result, adults and children who had been given little or no chance for survival are being restored to health. Rain has finally come to many parts of the drought stricken areas, bringing some welcome relief.

Lawsuit Against Church Dismissed

Del Rio, Texas (The following report is taken from the **Christian Chronicle**, September, 1985) The "scarlet letter" charges against the Northside church of Christ have been dropped after the plaintiff decided to settle out of court. A Del Rio state district judge dismissed the lawsuit August 12 after the plaintiff agreed to church stipulations that she apologize and pay $4,500 in court costs.

Jane Murray, 45, a Del Rio furniture saleswoman filed a $300,000 lawsuit last September against the church and five male leaders. Later she increased her request for damages to $1 million. The church countersued, asking $1.3 million in damages from Murray and her attorney, charging they had conspired against the church and had violated its civil rights.

Murray sued the church after a letter was read aloud at a 1982 worship service. The letter reproved her extra-marital affair and withdrew fellowship.

Prior to that action, church leaders met privately with Murray to urge her to repent. "We entreated her not to continue her lifestyle and to return to her family," said Rickie Jenkins, Northside minister.

Two years later, Murray, a former student of Freed-Hardeman College, married her lover and filed her lawsuit. Although she acknowledged she had left her husband and four children for another man, her suit alleged the

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church had invaded her privacy, caused her emotional distress, and damaged her reputation. In their countersuit, attorneys for the church maintained that by her actions, Murray had violated the church's rights to freedom of speech and religion. They also contended her actions violated the contract she made to uphold the church's moral teachings when she became a part of the congregation.

"When we responded to her suit with a $1.3 million countersuit . . . and she realized she was also running the risk of having her private activities exposed . . . I think she had to confront somethings she hadn't anticipated before," said Dallas attorney Donovan Campbell.

Since the Del Rio lawsuit did not go to court, it has no precedential value. But Rutherford Institute attorneys (who represented the church) believe it will have value in alerting potential plaintiffs and their counsel that there is a serious "down side risk" to filing a suit like this.

Before this lawsuit," said Campbell, "I don't believe most plaintiffs and their lawyers thought there was any risk — they had nothing to lose. Now they at least have serious settlement fees they might not be expecting and the possibility of a civil rights countersuit. . . ."

Skipper Hired

Fort Worth, Texas. W.E. Skipper, who once preached for the old South Main church of Christ (now Linville Forest) in Winston-Salem, was recently hired as the assistant director of International Gospel Hour, a radio program broadcast from Fort Worth, Texas. Skipper most recently preached for the Timberlane church of Christ in Tallahassee, Florida.

Church Periodicals

Nashville, Tenn. According to the 1985 yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, the churches of Christ have more publications than any other church group.

The book says that over 100 periodicals are published by members of the churches of Christ, but did not list each publication or the kinds of publications. The other church groups listing the most periodicals were: United Methodist (78), Southern Baptist Convention (46), and the Mennonites (16).

From the Editor

Here is an opportunity for anyone who likes to write letters to reach out and touch someone who is lonely and needs a friend — needs to feel that he is not totally forsakened by all the world. We have letters from two inmates in prison who are wanting someone, anyone, to write to them.

The first is a 31-year-old man serving a 15-year sentence for armed robbery. He is: Mr. Basil J. Kyles, P.O. Box 100, Q1-51, Somers, Conn. 06071.

The second is also a 31-year-old man who is incarcerated for writing bad checks. He expects to be released some time during the last part of 1986. He is: Mr. Michael Newberry, Box 220 — #120707, Stringtown, Okla. 74569.

News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Burlington. The Mebane Street church sent $300 for Mexican earthquake relief.

Greensboro. The South English Street congregation is now using their new and remodeled building.

Charlotte. John Risse of Sullivan, Indiana, will be moving to Charlotte to preach for Providence Road.

Selma. The church has purchased a brick building, which provides seating for more than 120, a fellowship area and classrooms. The address is 801 Lizzie Street. The preacher is Michael Hones, Route 2, Box 127, 27576; phone 965-2440.

Roanoke Rapids. A gospel meeting was scheduled in October at the local civic center.

Selma. Michael Jones reporting. The Selma church began in August 1978. At present we have about 50 members. We are happy to announce that we have purchased and moved into a nice church building. Our new address is 801 Lizzie Street. My home and phone have also changed to Rt. 2, Box 127, phone (919) 965-2440.

Kinston

BARRY JONES, Reporting: Since moving here in June, 1985, we have had 6 restorations and 2 baptisms. As you know, Kinston has been without a preacher for about one and one-half years — we will try to report more often.

My name is Barry Jones; I am a recent graduate of Harding Graduate School (M.Th.) and I have committed 10 years of my life to Kinston (that is, as long as my work is effective).

I hope your work is growing — we will try to "bust our seams" over here!

NC New Births

Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 4; Kinston, 2; Wilson, 2; Pine Valley, Wilmington, 1; Salisbury, 7; West Jefferson, 2; Washington, 1. Total: 19.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston. A campus minister to work at colleges in the Charleston area has been selected. He is Don Prather. Several congregations are assisting with financial support. Additional support is being sought. Contact the Christian Student Center, 6337 Rivers Avenue, Charleston, SC 29418; phone: 553-4963.

By-Pass, Union

DON NIX, Reporting: I wish to take this opportunity to commend to you the Union Church of Christ.

During the month of July we set a goal to set up five new Bible studies each month. Although we did this in the middle of July, we had already set up our five by the end of the month. In August we set up eight new studies. In September we again reached our goal. At the time of this writing we have two new studies for October.

As a result of these studies and the dedicated efforts of so many hard-working Christians the Lord has blessed us with 14 baptisms. Of that number nearly all are regular in attendance.

We thank God for the increase and hope that this will encourage our brethren in the Carolinas to work harder in this great effort to save the souls of men.

SC New Births

Central, Spartanburg, 2; Northeast, Taylors, 1; Duncan, 1; Summerville, 1; Myrtle Beach, 1; By-Pass, Union, 6; West Columbia, 1; St. Andrews Rd., Columbia, 3; Essex Village, Charleston, 1; S. Pinckney St., Union, 2; Mauldin, 3; Sumter, 5; Winnsboro, 5; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill, 1; North Charleston, 1. Total: 34.

* * *

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 27, NO. 12, DECEMBER 1985

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THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

FOUNDER CHRIST	WHERE JERUSALEM	WHEN A.D. 33	HEAD CHRIST
MATT. 16:18	ISA. 2:3; ACTS 2:5,47	ACTS 2	EPH. 1:22

ORGANIZATION PHIL. 1:1	Elders	Tit. 1:5-7; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7
	Deacons	Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 3:8-13
	Members	Acts 2:41-47; Col. 1:13; 1 Cor. 1:2
NAME EPH. 3:15	Church of God	1 Cor. 1:2; Acts 20:28
	The Body of Christ	Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23
	Churches of Christ	Matt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16
	Bride of Christ	Rom. 7:4; Rev. 21:9
NAME EPH. 3:15	Disciples	John 15:8; Acts 11:26
	Saints	Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1
	Brethren	Luke 8:21; Gal. 6:1
	Children	Gal. 3:26; 1 John 2:1
	Christians	Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16
CREED	Jesus Christ	Matt. 16:16-18, 10:32-33; Acts 8:37
RULE OF FAITH & PRACTICE	Word of God	Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jas. 1:21
WORSHIP	Sing	Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 14:15; Heb. 2:12
	Pray	1 Thes. 5:17
	Teach	Acts 5:42
	Communion	Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23
	Contribution	1 Cor. 16:1-2
MISSION	Save Souls	Matt. 5:13-16; John 15:8, 16; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:2; Heb. 5:12
WARNING	Be Faithful	Matt. 15:9; Matt. 15:13; Gal. 1:6-8; 2 John 9: Rev. 22:18-19

editorial

WE GOOFED! THAT'S ALL

Two of the three letters to the editor that appeared in our November issue were the same two that appeared in the October issue. How could such occur? Well, we do not plan to give an explanation beyond the fact that it happened. What we do regret is that it delayed some other letters which should have been in their place. But we are doing our best to get some of them in this issue (if more pressing matters do not crowd them out).

And while we are speaking of letters, we hope that every reader will feel free to write us at any time on any matter. It is a way that you can be heard (and believe it or not, we listen to you at **Carolina Christian**).

IT'S HARD TO WORK

A few weeks back one of the neighbor boys was riding his bicycle up and down the street beside our garden as we were working in it. As he rested himself from his activity, he watched us work. After watching for several minutes he exclaimed, "It's hard to work, isn't it!" We hastily replied, "It is not as hard to work as it is to ride that bicycle up and down the hill." But that missed the boy's point. He probably meant to say, "That's hard work, isn't it." While he obviously misstated his meaning, he started us to thinking (if what we do can be called thinking) that what he had done was to state precisely the attitude that many of us have toward work. We often complain because we have to work, and these complaints say in essence, "It's hard, oh so hard, to work."

But one should gratefully accept work because it is of God. That is, God made man to work and He made work for man. After creating Adam and Eve, God placed them in a beautiful garden with the obligation to dress and keep it (Gen. 2:15). After the fall He said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." (Gen. 3:19.) This is not to be taken, as many people do, that work is a part of the curse placed upon man because of sin. He had worked to perform before the fall. The curse was placed upon the earth by making it hostile to man by bringing forth thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:17-19). That is, the difficulty of cultivation was increased. Work **per se** was not part of the curse. The results of the curse, however, would make work more demanding, and that was a part of the curse. But work itself would be the means by which man could help himself and build a better world for others. This sets the tone for the remainder of the Bible.

And while work is often hard (as a consequence of the fall), it is also a blessing. What would life be if we had no work? It is not our purpose here to list all the blessings of work, but consider two:

1. It enables us to provide for our own needs, the needs of our family, and have some left over to help those in less fortunate circumstance than ourselves (Eph. 4:28). When we work we do not have to depend on others to provide the necessities of life for us. We can joyfully eat our own bread.

2. It enables us to do something constructive for the world. Of course all work is not constructive (e.g. the making and selling of alcoholic beverages) and Christians

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should not engage in such. A man ought to be involved in the kind of work of which he can take pride in his accomplishments at the end of the day. This means that there is more to work than earning money. We need to earn money in order to make a livelihood, but one who works for money alone will never find satisfaction in his work or be proud of the contribution he has made by it (unless he is earning the money to make a contribution).

No, the little boy misstated the fact, it is not hard to work. Instead, work is a blessing. What makes work hard is to go through life with the wrong attitude pertaining to it — the attitude that causes one to pity himself because he must work.

OF GOD OR THE DEVIL?

The phenomenon of speaking in tongues (?) is not limited to Pentecostals alone. In fact, it is not limited to traditional Christianity. It crosses all barrers and is known to have occurred in non-Christian or sub-Christian religions, religions no Pentecostal would admit of having the approval of God. Yet the Pentecostal claims that his speaking in tongues is a direct act of the Holy Spirit upon (or through) him. How then do they explain it when the same things happens to others, those whom they claim do not have the Holy Spirit working in their lives?

Here we wish to focus in on the occult or spiritualism, which for the most part are concerned with the spiritual world (in contrast with the real) and especially communication with the dead.

Ben Alexander, who spent several years as a medium in spiritualism has written a fascinating book called **Out From Darkness.** The first part of his book is autobiographical, telling of his experience in the occult. He is convinced that the devil works through them to perform the strange phenomena which reportedly occurs under controlled conditions, such as rappings, the ouiga board, materialization of spirits (by the use of ectoplasm from the medium's body), etc. In short, he believes that what happens in many seances are real — the real working of Satan. We do not, however, subscribe to this view, but certainly make no pretense of being able to explain all the things they appear to do. He tells of one such meeting in the following words: "On Wednesday night we had a developing circle with an experienced medium in charge. There were soft lights and soothing music, and people were encouraged to go into trance. Very often psychic phenomena took place. Occasionally, someone would give a prophecy. Hands were laid on the sick and tongues were spoken. Spiritualists claim these things to be the gifts of the Holy Spirit." (P. 35.)

But there is something even more fantastic. He reports the following phenomenon: "A minister's wife was being hypnotized for the relief of back trouble. To the surprise of everyone, this lady spoke fluently in a foreign language. The television station arranged to bring in the services of a linguist, especially when they found out that the hypnotized lady had never even learned another language, and never been outside America. The lady was hypnotized and conversation took place between the linguist and the lady concerned. The linguist said that the language was 17th-century German, and that the personality speaking through the hypnotized lady claimed to be a girl who died in the 17th century and was using this lady's body as a process of her reincarnation." (P. 139.) Such incidents are used by the reincarnationists to prove their false and fatal theory.

Now to our point: let the Pentecostalists explain the speaking in tongues of the occult and the speaking of a language never studied by one under hypnosis (and we have never seen or read a documented case of a Pentecostalist speaking in a known tongue which he had not learned) by non-miraculous means and they will have the explanation for their own phenomenon on the same natural grounds. If they ascribe the occult powers to the devil, as ultimately as it must be, how do they know that their own speaking in ecstatic utterences is not the work of Satan also? If Satan (or some unknown psychological power) is the source of the one, why is it not also the source of the other? If the devil can perform the same wonders as God (through the Holy Spirit), how are we to know the difference in the two?

MODEST DRESS IN WORSHIP

Modest dress is proper dress for the occasion, and modest dress in worship means that one is dressed in a way that respects God and obeys His word, is in good taste, and sets a good example for others to follow. We have never been in favor of a dress code in the worship of the Lord's church (other than that code which God Himself has given). That is to say that we have always felt that Christians should have freedom to make their own choices as to what they will wear when they assemble with other saints to worship. And our experience has indicated that most, when they exercise this freedom, will choose wisely. But occasionally we run into a problem of one who professes to be a Christian who does not make a responsible choice. That is, their apparel appears to us not to respect God, show good taste, nor set a good example. What then are we to do?

No longer than 25 years ago this was an unheard of problem. It seems to us that everyone then dressed for the occasion when they came to worship or else they just did not come at all. But gradually there came a change (and certainly not all of it is bad). At first, some began to wear more casual clothing. Then work clothing. And now we often see just plain sloppiness, such as one sees among the irresponsible hippie-type people. While we know no law of God which says specifically that we must dress the best we can when we worship, it seems to us that one's attitude toward God, good taste, and the desire to be the right kind of example demands it.

Let us draw a parallel. Suppose one was invited to the White House to visit with the President. Would he wear sloppy clothing or shorts? We think not. But our presence before God in worship is more vital, more important, and should show more reverence and respect than a visit with the President. Or again, would we attend a funeral in the kind of clothing (we refer to tight fitting, loose hanging, shorts, halters, tank shirts, etc.) that we now often see in worship? We do not know of anyone who would. We should understand that it is not a violation of some law to so attend a funeral but rather the violation of good taste. Is respect for the dead more important than respect for God and His cause?

Do not read more into what we have here said than is there. We are not saying that one must be finely dressed to worship God (that is not always possible and often not practical). We are suggesting that when we do worship perhaps we should wear the best we can (that is, we should appear neat and respectful). We are not trying to bind a human dress code on the people of God as a religious rite (this would be neither right nor acceptable with us). We are trying to challenge you to be in good taste in what you wear. Some occasions call for more formal dress than others. For example, suppose the best man showed up at a wedding improperly dressed. How would we feel about him? It seems to us that the way one dresses reveals his attitude about the occasion. If so, what kind of attitude is our manner of dress displaying about worship?

Beached Whales

David Vaughn, Burlington, NC

Are we as a brotherhood floundering toward an end like the end of beached whales? Sometimes it seems as if we are determined to self-destruct. There have always been individuals in the Lord's church who did not seem to know nor care that their actions were taking them into apostasy. From what has been spoken and written over the past few months it appears the number with such an attitude has increased.

Have we surrendered to pragmatism? Do we as a brotherhood know what we believe? Are we so confused over baptism and instrumental music that we are going to divide? William James defined pragmatism as "the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, 'catagories,' supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts." (**Pragmatism,** pp. 54-55.) I believe our brotherhood wants unity; loves unity; and is willing to work and pray for unity. But can we say the end justifies the means? Can we, as God's people, turn our backs on clear doctrines of Scripture, join ranks with our neighbors and then boldly proclaim unity?

Unity, compassion, and mercy are qualities of the Christ-like person. However, those fine traits do not save us. We cannot be saved without them, but they do not save us. We are saved by the blood of Christ in our obedience to the gospel. Our salvation also depends upon our continuence in the truth.

The situation ethics advocate, Joseph Fletcher, explains his rejection of faith by saying, "In me the desire to believe — the wish, the will — just slipped away, almost imperceptible." ("Odyssey From Theology to Humanism," **Religious Humanism**, Winter 1980, p 156.) Fletcher's desire to believe something else, however good or desirable it might have been, was stronger than his faith. He said he simply outgrew his need for faith. Regardless of how strong our desire is to be united with some or all our religious neighbors, we must not permit that desire to overcome our faith and desire to honestly, humbly, and prayerfully follow God's word.

The Lord said, "Cursed is man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord." (Jer. 17:5.)

Solomon wrote, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." (Prov. 3:5-6.)

The whales who beach themselves destroy themselves. A person or a group of people who turn from God will, without repenting, be rejected by God. The future of our souls and the souls of future generations depend on our faithfulness to God. Are we going to fail them in this crucial hour?

Is the Bible Clear?

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

Not long ago a young brother spoke in a private conversation on how vague the Bible was in so many areas. He said it was wrong for a preacher to be specific when the Bible was unclear about various matters. He desired the simple reading of God's word to the audience, then let them apply it as they personally saw fit.

Brethren, do you see a problem with such an attitude? Obviously, there are disputable matters in Christianity (Rom. 14:1), and also some things hard to understand (2 Pet. 3:11-18). But many things are clear. The preachers of the Lord are obligated to properly handle and explain the word to their audience (Acts 17:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:15-16). One truly wonders how far this brother would go to say what is unclear and what is plain.

Christ's audience also had trouble understanding Him, but this was not His mishandling of the word of God. Rather it was the people's stubbornness and refusal to believe.

"Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father, the devil. . . ." (John 8:43-44.)

"Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, 'How long do You make us doubt? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and you do not believe. . . .' " (John 10:24-25.)

Truly there are preachers who overstep their bounds and speak beyond the word of God. Truly, they will suffer punishment. But let us please recognize that one tactic of the devil is to confuse us about what God has said (Gen. 3:1-5). When one has convinced his hearers that God is really not as plain as you thought about a subject, then he has opened up the box of Pandora to allow whatever is desired.

Let us mark it down in no uncertain terms that the Bible can be understood: "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine. . . ." (John 7:17.) "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God." (1 Cor. 2:12.) "For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. . . ." (2 Cor. 1:13.) "When you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. . . ." (Eph. 3:4.) "Therefore do not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. 5:17.)

Brethren, God's revelation is given to us specifically for our understanding. Therefore we are obligated to understand and obey. Woe to that preacher who binds where God has not bound (1 Cor. 4:6; Prov. 30:6), and woe to those who loose where God has bound (Gal. 1:6-9).

Let us all beware, beloved brethren.

"Where Are You Going?"

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

That's not a bad question to ask yourself on a regular basis. Our tomorrows turn into yesterdays too fast for us not to be regularly evaluating our lives.

Where are you going in life? Take some time to think about it. You know, the truth of the matter is that we're all exchanging our lives for something — what are you exchanging your life for? Money? Material things? Fame? Good times?

Two thousand years ago a Galilean carpenter asked a small group of men this question:

> *"For what will it Profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

Where are you going in life? More importantly, where are you going when this life is over? These words were found on a tombstone:

Pause dear friend as you pass by,
As you are now so once was I.
As I am now you soon will be,
Prepare yourself to follow me.

Below these words were two more lines that some thoughtful passerby had added:

To follow you I'm not content,
Until I know which way you went.

Yes, we're all exchanging our lives for something — make sure that you're not getting shortchanged! Where are you going?

Look Unto the Fields

Ray D. Winn, High Point, NC

As one who has spent several years in foreign mission work and a good many more years in mission efforts here in the United States, my mind often wanders to those places exotic and far away which are frequented by tourists looking to see things they have never seen before. Ours is indeed a beautiful world and the sights are such as to cause us to marvel at the handiwork of our God. I have looked upon scenes that absolutely defy decription, the real beauty of which can only be known by those who have likewise stood spellbound as they gazed in wonder.

Jesus exhorts us, "I say unto you, lift up yours eyes, and look on the fields. . . ." (John 4:35.) He is pleading that we look, not at the natural wonders of the world, but on those in the world who know not Jesus as Savior and are hungering and thirsting for the knowledge of God's word. We should always keep in mind that those vistas in beautiful, far-flung places are filled with those who are eternally lost and have no hope but that Christians will be interested enough to go, take, and send the message and the messengers of hope to them before it is eternally too late. My mind goes to those faithful and valiant souls who have given up home and loved ones to go to those strange places God has showed them. They labor in areas where the church is almost non-existant, where Christian fellowship is so rare as to be a cause for great celebration. They get so homesick, but so often there is not another of like precious faith with whom to share their problems and so their heart aches alone.

The next time you travel to some beautiful place frequented by the tourists, look with the camera of your heart for a moment and consider the native souls. Allow yourself to see what God sees, but few in the world ever stop from their own pleasures to look upon. Look at the lost of that place and remember that Jesus died for each one of them. He gave His life, shed His blood that they might not be lost. But they are lost — and probably remain lost. Why? Because the followers of Jesus forget what their task is.

Clarifying the Difficulties Arising From Alleged Contradictions

(Part 5)

James L. Meadows, Memphis, TN

(11) 1 Samuel 31:3-5 vs. 2 Samuel 1:5-10 — **How did Saul meet his death?** 1 Samuel 31:3-5 states that Saul fell on his sword and killed himself, while 2 Samuel 1:5-10 relates the story of the young Amalekite who claimed to have killed Saul. How did Saul really die? **First,** 1 Samuel 31:3-5 is a true record of how Saul really died. He had been wounded and, afraid of capture by the Philistines, asked his armorbearer to kill him. When his armorbearer refused, he killed himself. **Second,** it is true that the events recorded in 2 Samuel 1:5-11 took place, but what the Amalekite told is not the truth. How does one explain that the young Amalekite just happened to be wandering around on Mount Gilboa and met Saul (2 Samuel 1:6)? Furthermore, it is not likely that Saul would have asked an uncircumcised Amalekite to kill him, since he had earlier expressed alarm at being thrust through and abused by the uncircumcised (1 Sam. 31:4).

(12) 1 Kings 6:1 vs. Acts 13:19, 20 — **Difference in the time period.** "And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." Difficulty has arisen in trying to reconcil these verses with 1 Kings 6:1 which says: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt . . . he began to build the house of the Lord." This indicates a longer period of time. What is the explanation? **First,** "the text from Acts really has no bearing upon the subject, since, according to the order of the Greek in the four oldest and best manuscripts, the correct rendering is, 'He gave them their land as a possession about four hundred and fifty years; and, after that, he gave [to them] judges until Samuel the prophet.'"[19] **Second,** Anstey, in his **Chronology of the Old Testament,** shows that the years of servitude, rest, usurpation, and judgeship, from, the first servitude under Cushan to the election of Saul, is exactly four hundred and fifty years. ". . . Paul is, however, quite right in using the word 'about,' and he was compelled to use it in order to be accurate, because the period of which he is speaking is the period from the division of the Land to the end of the Judgeship of Samuel. It includes, therefore, the so-called Joshua-Judges chasm of 13 years, and this is not specified in the Text of the Old Testament, and not included in the 450 years that are specified. St Paul is obliged to allow for this space, and he does so quite naturally and quite accurately by describing this period as a period of 'about 450 years.' "[20] He further says that the ". . . 480 is arrived at by omitting from the 594 years of the entire period the 111 years of the six servitudes and the 3 years of usurpation of Abimelech."[21] These years are omitted "because the author is computing the years

of the Theocracy, of the government of God, of Isra-El, and during these years Israel was not Isra-El, not governed by God, but under the heel of the oppressor and the usurper. Hence they are not included in the Theocratic years of the reckoning of God, though they are reckoned in the computation of the years of the age of the World."[22] **Third,** some explain the difficulty as an error by the copyist due to the similarity of letters and blurred images they may have seen.

CONCLUSION

"It is my judgement that many of the so-called discrepancies will be resolved as evangelical scholars give their attention to them. It would be foolish for me or for anyone else to assert that all of the difficulties will be answered this side of eternity. They may, or they may not be. But the absence of a solution for even a single remaining problem is no reason to suppose that there is no solution. The fact that there have been dogmatic assertions made about the certainty of this mistake or that only to have the miasma dispelled by a solution suggests that need for critics to be very tentative in charging error against Scriptures."[23]

FOOTNOTES

[1] Jevons, **Elementary Lessons in Logic,** p. 118.

[2] Wayne Jackson, **Christian Courier,** Date unknown.

[3] Rene Packe, **The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture** (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), p. 148.

[4] B.B. Warfield, **The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible,** p. 439.

[5] J.W. McGarvey, **Evidence of Christianity** (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1956).

[6] John W. Haley, **An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible** (B.C. Goodpasture, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1951), p. 31.

[7] **Ibid.,** p. 36.

[8] **David Hartley, A Collection of Theological Tracts,** by Richard Watson (London: Evans, et. al., 1791), Vol. V., p. 33.

[9] B.F. Westcott, **Introduction to the Study of the Gospels** Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1872), p. 393.

[10] Haley, **op. cit.,** pp. 3-29.

[11] Harold Lindsell, **The Battle for the Bible** (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), p. 161.

[12] Haley, **op. cit.,** p. 357.

[13] **Ibid.,** p. 351.

[14] **Ibid.,** p. 380.

[15] **Ibid.,** p. 361.

[16] **Ibid.,** p. 333.

[17] E.M. Zerr, **Bible Commentary** (University City: Missouri Mission Messenger, 1948), Vol. 2, p. 85.

[18] Haley, **op. cit.,** p. 65.

[19] **Ibid.,** p. 422.

[20] Martin Anstey, **Chronology of the Old Testament** (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1973), p. 74.

[21] **Ibid.,** p. 80.

[22] **Ibid.,** p. 80.

[23] Lindsell, **op. cit.,** pp. 181-82.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

Peter

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

Introduction: Peter is the Greek form of the Aramaic surname Cephas, meaning a rock or stone, which Christ bestowed upon Simon (more properly Symeon). Simon was the son of a certain John, who with his sons, Andrew and Peter were fisherman on the sea of Galilee. Peter was a native of Bethsaida (upper tip of the sea of Galilee) and subsequently dwelt with his family at Capernaum (about 4 or 5 miles west of Bethsaida and also on the sea of Galilee). Peter was probably a disciple of John the Baptist, and was in the first instance brought to Jesus by his

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brother Andrew (John 1:41-42). Peter received three separate and distinct calls from Jesus: **First,** to become His diciple (John 1:40). **Second,** to become His constant companion (Matt. 4:19; Mark 1:17; and Luke 5:10). **Third,** to be His Apostle (Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:14; Acts 1:3).

Peter's Temperament. Peter's ardor, earnestness, courage, vigor, and impetuosity of disposition marked him from the first as the leader of the disciples of Jesus. He was the natural spokesman of the apostolic band. He was the first to confess Jesus as Christ and Son of God, the confession or Rock, upon which the Lord's church is founded.

Peter's life exhibits three well-marked stages. First,there is the period of training, as exhibited in the gospel narratives. During these years of personal association with Christ, he learned to know both Christ and himself. And though he brought them to an end in a threefold denial of the Master whom he had boasted that he would never forsake, Jesus closed them with a loving probing of Peter's heart and restoration of his peace and confidence. **Second,** the period of leadership in the church, as told in the earlier chapters of the book of Acts. During these years Peter justified his surname and through him to no small extent the church that Christ established grew. It was by his bold and strong hand that the church was led. It was he who moved the disciples to fill up the broken ranks of the apostolate (Acts 1:15-26) to replace Judas as one of the apostles — the names of Barsabbas and Matthias were put forward and lots were cast and Matthias was thus chosen to replace Judas. It was Peter who proclaimed to the assembled multitudes the meaning of why Christ came to earth, suffered, and died. He was the one who gave the great sermon wherein 3000 who heard him, were pricked in the heart, and accepted Christ (Acts 2:14-42). He was the leader in the public healing of the lame man (Acts 3:4-16), done in the name of Christ to prove that Christ was the Son of God. It was by his voice that Ananias and Sapphira were rebuked and struck dead because they lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-10). Peter was the one who made Aeneas whole again after this man had been an invalid and confined to his bed for eight years (Acts 9:33-34). He was the one who raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36-43). Above all, it was by his hand that the door of salvation was opened alike to the Jews in his great sermon at Pentecost and to the Gentiles in the case of Cornelius (Acts 10). **Third,** his period of humble work in the kingdom of Christ is told in the epistles of the New Testament. When the foundation of the church had been laid, Peter takes a subordinate place, and in humble labor works to spread the boundaries of the kingdom. Peter opened the door to the Gentiles and Paul became the Apostle to the Gentiles. As the Apostle to the circumcised, Peter prosecuted his less brilliant work, wherever Jews could be found and he then left Jerusalem to James and the civilized world to Paul.

Finally we know that he glorified God by a martyr's death (John 21:18-19). Beyond this, Scripture tells us nothing of his fortunes, labors, sufferings, or successes, except what can be learned from his two epistles, 1 and 2 Peter. In them he stands before us in singular beautiful humility, not pressing the recognition of personal claims to leadership upon the Christian community, but following up the teaching of Paul or of Jude with his own, and exhorting his readers to hold fast to the common faith.

No character in Scripture, history, or may we even say in all literature, is drawn for us more clearly or strongly than Peter's. In the gospel accounts, in the Acts, and in the epistles, it is the same man that stands out before us in dramatic distinctiveness. Always eager, ardent, impulsive, he is preeminently the man of action in the apostolic circle. He exhibits the defects of his qualities as well as his excellence throughout his life. His virtues and faults had their common root in his enthusiastic disposition. It is to his praise that along with the weed of rash haste, there grew more strongly into his life the fair plant of burning love and ready reception of truth. Authentic history adds but little to our knowledge of Peter's life beyond what we glean from the New Testament. Conformably to the notice of his martyrdom told in John 21: 18-19, we are credibly told that he died by crucifixion about the same time that Paul died by the sword around A.D. 68.

Peter was a man, a Christian, that all of us who are Christians can relate to and identify with. This makes him even more dear to us. Peter was weak — so are we. He was strong, and we too can be strong. He was impulsive, and who among us can claim to be otherwise? He was impatient, and can any of us claim we are totally patient in all things? As a matter of fact as Christians we should possess a certain degree of impatience with inaction, procrastination, and do-nothing on the part of many in the Christian world. Peter said he would never deny Christ and I am sure we too would say the same thing. But his weaknesses caused him to deny the Lord three times and our weaknesses could and likely would under similar circumstances. He would act without thinking, but do we not the same? He showed fervor and courage, love and humility, empathy and compassion, and strangely we do likewise. If we study Peter carefully we can see much of ourselves in him.

The two Epistles that Peter wrote are known as general, in that they were not addressed to any particular church or any specific individual. They were written to all Christians. While they were general in nature it is assumed that they were probably written to Christians dispersed throughout the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. They were probably written during the early 60's of the first century. His first epistle is noted for its gentle tone of admonition and exhortation. He exhorts Christians to a life of purity and spirituality, to abstain from malice, envy, slander, and other carnal passions. He tells them to show sympathy, love, humility, hospitality, and unity of the spirit. He encourages them to follow Christ's example in suffering and to have indestructible confidence in God. His second epistle is a reminder of the truth of the gospel against pernicious attacks of false teachers who were bringing in destructive heresies. Like Israel's false prophets these false teachers were corrupt and immoral, indulging in revelries and carousels, they were licentious, and defiled by the world and its passions. These teachers were scoffling at the belief in the Lord's return. Peter, however, reminds his readers that the Lord will keep His promise; therefore, they are warned to keep themselves spotless and pure and to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He exhorts Christians to be zealous in the cause of the Lord and outlines seven steps that Christians must do in order to confirm their call and make their election sure — that is to make sure of their entrance into Heaven, our ultimate goal. (2 Peter 1:1-11.)

Hear What the Spirit Says

Howard Winters, West Jefferson, NC

The Lord's instruction to all seven of the churches addressed in Revelation is the same: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Rev. 2:7.) Many things and many people clammer to be heard, but the churches of Christ are

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limited to hearing what is said by the Holy Spirit. They are to hear that and nothing more (cf. John 10:4, 5, 27). This eliminates all the opinions and conjectures of men; all uninspired creeds and religious doctrines; all the philosophies and ethical systems of men; the Pope and the false system of Catholicism; all modern or pseudo-revelations. The only way the Spirit speaks today is through the written word. It is complete and final (Jude 3). We can neither add to, take from, or modify it in anyway without heaven's curse (Rev. 22:18, 19; Gal. 1:6-9). It, and it alone, reveals all that we need to make our life complete and acceptable to God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Thus we are to hear what the Spirit speaks through the word.

It is the function of the Holy Spirit, in the Christian age, to reveal to the mind of men the will of God. A failure to understand this simple fact has led to most of the religious division and confusion in both doctrine and practice which characterize the world today. The Bible teaches, both implicitly and explicitly, that in order to be saved one must do the will of God — he must hear what the Spirit says with a view of doing it (e.g. Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46; Heb. 5:8-9; Rom. 6:16-18). To do God's will is man's whole duty (Eccl. 12:13), the whole reason for his being. And while there can be no doubt of the truthfulness of this, one cannot do the will of God unless he knows it — he cannot obey God until God gives him instructions, directions, or commandments. But it is impossible for one to know God's will by his own unaided wisdom and reason (Isa. 55:8-9) — impossible for him to know it until it has been revealed to him (1 Cor. 1:18-2:16). This can only mean that for man to know and do God's will he must have a revelation from God. To make known that revelation is precisely the function of the Holy Spirit. His work then is to reveal the mind of God to the mind of men. The following should help emphasize this fact as well as to show how it is done:

1. God has given all power or authority to Christ (Matt. 28:18). He thus becomes the source of everything pertaining to Christianity, the one whom we must obey. The gospel is His message, His will, that which must be made known to man if he is to be saved. Christ is the Savior and it is His prerogative to stipulate the terms upon which He will save, that is, it is His prerogative alone to reveal or withhold the contents of His divine mind. We have no means at our disposal to penetrate it. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. 8:34.) These are rhetorical questions and the natural answer is "None, no one!" The only way we can know the mind of God is by revelation.

2. Christ sent His apostles as His messengers, His ambassadors, to reveal and preach His will to the lost world. In giving the Great Commission He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16.) The apostles were to preach (reveal the contents of) the gospel. Those who heard it were required to believe and be baptized. Those who obeyed would be saved; those who believed not would be lost. Their response to the gospel would determine their destiny. When they heard they would have an opportunity to do the will of God; when they would do His will, the Lord promised to save them.

3. The apostles were to deliver the message to men under the immediate power and direction of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was to make known the revelation through them. It is here that so many become totally confused as to the work of the Spirit. They start out with an erroneous preconception that the Holy Spirit works identically in all Christians, never observing that He worked in a special way through the apostles and chosen representatives of Christ during the formative days of Christianity and in the writing of the Bible. His work through them was to reveal, confirm, and deliver the word of God. But not so with anyone else. The apostles received the baptismal (miraculous) measure of the Spirit. This enabled them to speak for Christ. As the Spirit worked through them, they did not speak their own will, but His. They spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4), that is the Spirit put the will of God into human words and by the words chosen (by the Spirit) conveyed the mind of God to the mind of men. Only the apostles and other men endowed by the

Spirit could do this. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. 2:16.) In short, they spoke by inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16). What they said was the word of God — the Spirit revealing the will of God through them (1 Cor. 2:10-11).

4. The Spirit inspired (guided in a miraculous way) the apostles to write the divine message in the New Testament. That which they wrote was not the word of men but the word of God. Paul makes this certain by saying, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. 14:37.) The Spirit first spoke through living men, but before their death He guided them into writing the same message, the gospel, in a divine book. When that book speaks it is the Spirit speaking.

5. From all of this we must conclude that the Scriptures are the Spirit-inspired revelation of God's will to man — they are the only means by which the Spirit reveales the mind of God to the mind of men. To follow the New Testament then is to follow the Spirit — to do what the Spirit says to the churches.

What the Scriptures say is the revealed will of God. To do the will of God is the whole duty of man. What the Spirit says is what the Bible says. So what the Spirit says to the churches is what God wills for the churches (and individuals) to do. That and nothing more.

She Became Good for Something

Rubel Shelly, Nashville, TN

One of the vaguest concepts in the minds of most believers is "goodness." I have struggled to give the idea specific content in my mind. Perhaps one way to do it is by means of a contrast.

Do you know the expression "good for nothing"? Well, a Christian is good for something. He has a purpose to life in glorifying God. He sees his mission each day in terms of sharing the knowledge of God. One who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ wants his life to count for all that is holy and right.

My friend had been an alcoholic for several years. It had been over three years since she had gone a full day without drinking heavily. To use her own words, she was a "typical, good-for-nothing drunk." She couldn't keep her house, love her husband, or be a mother to her children.

Then the goodness of God led her to repentance and recovery. Unlike some alcoholics who get jolted back to their senses by accident, illness, or family disintegration, she was brought back to hers by the fact that her husband and two girls wouldn't leave her or give up on her. They stayed, suffered with her, and prayed that she would find a way to deal with her problem.

The undeserved, continued love of her family moved her to confess her sin. She committed herself to a strategy of coping with her disease by God's grace. Alcoholics Anonymous gave her a support group which really understood her situation.

Change began to occur in her life. There were extremely difficult times for a while — with occasional setbacks and failures. But the power of God to transform was allowed to work in her life. She not only stopped drinking but began to function again as a whole person within her world.

It has been several years now since she has touched alcohol. Her family life is idyllic. She teaches Sunday School. Nobody who has come to know her within the past three years would ever dream that she was once a "good-for-nothing drunk." Now she is a good-for-something disciple of the Lord Jesus!

And do you know what she is best at? You've probably guessed already. She counsels alcoholics and has helped any number of men and women find a way to get free of an awful addiction.

Such is the nature of Christian "goodness." It points one toward the goal of being useful for a specific purpose. Understood this way, each of us can examine himself for the presence of this Christian virtue in daily life.

The Letter of James — Practical Religion

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

Authorship and Background. This epistle stands first in order of seven which have been called "general," because of the fact that they were not addressed like those of Paul, to a particular church, churches, or individuals. James, like 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude, addresses itself to the churches generally. James is directed to the "Twelve Tribes of the Dispersion," a dedication which shows that it was designed for the instruction of Jewish Christians scattered abroad among the Gentile countries. The author of this letter is "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." James, the author, has been traditionally identified as James, the brother of the Lord (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3). The brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him during His ministry (Mark 3:21, 31-35, etc.); after the ascension, however, the brothers of Jesus are found with the Jerusalem church (Acts 1:14), and Paul speaks of the appearance of the risen Lord to James (1 Cor. 15:17), who became a leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18). There is no personal information about the author in the letter itself, except that he calls himself a teacher. He counsels with authority, and addresses his readers throughout as brethren. There is some dispute about the personality of the James who wrote this letter. There are three distinguished disciples which bear that name: (1) James, one of the sons of Zebedee, who was one of the twelve; (2) James, the son of Alphaeus, also an apostle, called James the Less; and (3) James called by Paul in Galatians "The brother of our Lord," the man who appears in Acts, chapter 15, as wielding a preeminent influence in the church at Jerusalem. Nothing can be established as to the date of the letter. If the traditional identification of the author is correct (James the brother of our Lord) the letter must have been written around A.D. 45. The letter bears a distinct flavor of primitiveness. The Christians place of worship is still spoken of as a synagogue; Christians are not sharply discriminated from Jews; the sins rebuked and errors corrected are such as would naturally spring up in a Jewish soil; while there is not a trace of the controversies which in the sixth decade of the first Christian century were already distracting the whole church. It is generally considered to be the earliest of the New Testament writings. The object of its writing was to reform and correct those sins and errors to which its lately Christianized Jewish readers continued to be liable, and to encourage them in the sore trials to which they were exposed.

Characteristics of the Letter. The letter is concerned mainly with the practical aspects of the Christian faith, consisting of maxims (sayings) and counsel for everyday conduct, of the type known as wisdom literature (such as the book of Proverbs). There is very little reference to any of the central doctrines of the Christian faith and the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned but twice (1:1; 2:1). It is not considered a letter of doctrine, but as mentioned, one of Christian conduct. James points out that faith is manifested in works, and is not to be thought of simply in terms of belief. Faith is shown to be alive and active by the work it brings forth. He points out that whoever claims to have faith without works is mistaken, for apart from works faith is barren and dead, and is not really saving faith. There is no contradiction between the teaching of James and that of Paul concerning faith and works. Paul endeavored to show that the works of the law (Mosaic Law) cannot bring salvation, but salvation is brought by faith. James shows that saving faith must necessarily manifest itself in deeds, so that if there are no deeds there is no faith. The author also teaches on the necessity to curb one's anger; charity and purity; taming the tongue; withholding censorious judgment; the vanity of material wealth; the prohibition of swearing; all of which contain echoes of the teaching of Jesus, particularly those included in the Sermon on the Mount. At times flashes of indignation appear, as in the writer's strictures against snobbery in preference to rich over poor; his condemnation of injurious talk; his objection to friendship with the world; and his warnings against the rich who trust in their wealth. This is no ivory tower philosophy; these are hard bits of practical advice delivered by one who knew the temptations to which all Christians are subject, and who was intensely concerned that in all things, in deed, word and thought, believers should be doers of the word, not merely hearers, always resisting the devil, and drawing near to God.

The Letter. The epistle of James contains five chapters and one could, and not improperly title each chapter, as follows: Chapter 1: On Temptations; Chapter 2: Faith and Works; Chapter 3: Control of the Tongue; Chapter 4: Control of the Passions; Chapter 5: Warnings to the Rich.

A capsulized version of the Epistle would not erroneously be accomplished in this fashion: **Chapter 1** — Patience; wisdom and pray for it; pray with faith that prayer will be answered; be positive in our thinking as Christians — know the truth and persist in it; be content with that which God has given us; endure temptations and be strengthened thereby; realize that we are tempted because of our own thoughts; realize that everything we are, or have, or will have comes from God; we should show ourselves to be staunch Christians (the firstfruits of His creatures); be good listeners; be slow to speak — that is without carefully weighing our words; control our temper; be pure and clean in thought and deed; be meek; search the Scriptures — learn all we can about Christ; be doers of Christ's word and not just hearers (because hearers only merely deceive themselves); if we will hear and then do, we will be blessed; control our tongues (do not gossip, spread rumors, watch our talk, keep it clean); be kind and helpful to the orphans, widows, and all who need our help; keep ourselves unspotted from the world (do not get involved in worldly or sinful affairs which tear you down, hurt your Christian character, or harm the church. **Chapter 2** — Show no partiality because of a person's wealth, stature, prestige, etc.; keep the whole law (if we offend in one we are guilty of all); do not commit adultery; do not kill, show mercy to others; have faith but show your faith by your works; do something for the needy — do not just say something should be done for them; having a living faith by doing the works as a Christian; believe in God but remember the devil believes also — therefore we must do works to show the superiority of Christianity; if we have faith without works — we are dead — the same as the body without the spirit is dead. **Chapter 3** — Offend not in word (bridle the tongue); show works with meekness and wisdom; do not envy; do not have strife or quarrel with others. **Chapter 4** — Do not lust; let there be no war or fightings among Christians; pray and ask God for needs in proper manner; do not pray for frivolous, wrong, or immaterial things; be on the alert against friendship with the world (sin); avoid pride and haughtiness; be graceful and humble; submit yourselves to God; resist the devil; draw close to God; repent of sins; keep your heart pure and clean; speak no evil of one another; do not judge others; do not be boastful of what you will do in the future; remember our lives are in God's hands — we live only because He wills it; we do not know what tomorrow will bring; remember our lives are as a vapor — here for a moment and it vanishes; do not boast because boasting is evil; do good when you know to do good — it is a sin of omission if you fail to do so. **Chapter 5** — Those who are rich must take heed if their riches have become their god; pay those who work for you their fair dues; do not gain wealth at expense of others; have patience (remember Job); do not begrudge others; suffer affliction for the Lord knowing that God will be with you; swear not (say yes or no as the truth of the matter); pray for each other; if any of us err, the others should help him; always be interested in the sinner and try to convert him from the error of his ways.

Practical Religion. Every one of us would do well to carefully read the epistle of James again and again. Just five short chapters and but 108 verses, but volumes of excellent teachings and exhortations. How good it would be if we could but grasp them and apply them to our short lives that we have here on earth. How wonderful the world would be if the leaders of the nations would heed these words and follow them and lead the people throughout the world according to these teachings. They are so appropriate for man to man; man to God; father to child and children to parents. Think on these teachings always every day throughout your life.

BACKFIRE

Letters to the Editor

Dear Howard:

Enclosed is payment for 10 **Commentary on Romans.** I appreciate the good work you are doing in the Carolinas, and especially the commentary. In my opinion it is the best that I have read. Hope you will print more. I enjoyed five good years preaching for the Jericho church in Mocksville. It was a pleasure to work with all the good brethren in the Carolinas. I look forward to returning some day to work again. — Charles C. Isenburg, Edmonton, KY.

We have often said, "Once you get the Carolinas in your blood, no other place on earth will be quite so satisfying." May God grant it to be so.

Dear Howard:

In response to the letter by Jim Thompson regarding what he can do to help stem the tide of abortions, many children in this country are killed because the mothers bearing them do not believe they have any alternatives. Christians do need to get involved in the lives of people to help them and assist them in doing what is right. AGAPE of North Carolina is an agency that is supported by individual Christians and churches of Christ in the Carolinas. We are involved in counseling with women who are pregnant and helping them come to a right decision in deciding to have the child. Then the alternatives that are available to them would be to marry, become a single parent, or place the child for adoption with a Christian family. Christians like Mr. Thompson need to know that we are available to counsel with girls and women who are experiencing a problem pregnancy and with our newly received adoption license can place children for adoption.

There is a need also for Christians to open up their homes to women who are pregnant and need a place to live during their pregnancy. We also eventually have a need for volunteers to help in counseling girls and women experiencing problem pregnancies to help them. I encourage people to contact me about their interest in helping girls/women to make the right decision in regards to their unborn child. Address me at 302 College Road, Greensboro, NC 27410 or call (919) 855-7107. — David R. Clinard, Greensboro, NC.

We have always been opposed to the church (not individuals) contributing to such organizations as AGAPE, but have we spent our time and energy opposing something rather than providing acceptable alternatives? Perhaps we need to question our theory or else build better mouse traps. It appears from this letter that an ounce of practice (prevention of abortion) is worth a ton of objections (opposition to abortion but objecting to the method by which it is successfully prevented).

Dear Howard:

My reason for writing is to reply to Jim Thompson's letter and your answer to it. Abortion in this country and the world has troubled and frustrated me for many years. It is reported that there is one abortion every 22 seconds.

I have been a part of Right To Life for four years at least. People of every religion and some with no religion at all make up RTL. I have never been confronted with supporting any religion in all my years in it. Why can't we use the opportunity of working with groups like RTL to teach others about Christ? That's what I have done. I am a New Testament Christian and I will not support anything that is contrary to that. Why can't congregations of the church in a particular county join forces and fight abortion? Why do we not hear more sermons on this horrid subject? There is plenty of free material available for distribution. Then we could refuse to purchase the product of companies which promote abortion. How many know that the Upjohn company is responsible for the production of prostaglandins which women use to abort unwanted babies? How many know that the Asgrow Seed Company is owned by Upjohn? Buying products made by the Upjohn Company is supporting (indirectly, HW) a company that's killing babies. Furthermore, one can write his congressman, senator, governor, etc. and voice his opinion.

Your **Commentary on Romans** is great and I am ready and waiting for the next one. — Linda Deveous, Yadkinville, NC.

Dear Howard:

As always, it was great to spend a couple of weeks working in Carolina Bible camp, and I look forward to CBC's 30th anniversary next year. The Sunday after camp, I was worshipping at the Jericho church in Mocksville and Wayne Hendricks made the comment that he thought there were three important things that parents should try to do for their children: (1) rear them in a Christian home; (2) send them to a Christian college; and (3) send them to Bible camp. I am thankful that my parents did all three! I look forward to receiving **Carolina Christian.** It is a great way for me to keep up with what is going on in my native Carolina land. Also, I am enjoying your **Commentary on Romans.** — Jonathan F. Seamon, Nashville, TN.

Dear Howard:

I am writing concerning the comments you made in the August (1985) issue about the relationship of logic to our study and use of Scripture. I think your comments were precisely on target. . . . But a few years back . . . I would have resented your comments. . . . You might be interested in the following quotation from Eusebius. He tells of those who "Treat the divine scriptures recklessly and without fear. They have set aside the rule of ancient faith; and Christ they have not known. They do not endeavor to learn what the divine scriptures declare, but strive laboriously after any form of syllogism which may be derived to sustain their impiety. And if anyone brings before them a passage of divine scripture, they see whether a conjunctive or disjunctive syllogism can be made from it. . . . They forsake the holy writing of God to devote themselves to geometry. (**Ecclesiastical History** 5. 28. 13ff.)." This quotation seems to be as appropriate today as when originally written. — Rubel Shelly, Nashville, TN.

We are extremely glad to see the quotation from Eusebius. It shows that old issues never die; they just stay and stay.

Dear brother Winters:

I always appreciate reading **Carolina Christian,** but I like the editorials, especially in the August (1985) issue. I have copied the first one in my bulletin. . . . It seems to me that some believe Hebrews 11:6 says that those who come to God must **prove** that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek after Him. I agree with you that testimony of the witnesses and history of the events are much more convincing and motivating than is logic, especially poor logic. — Orlan Sawey, South Boston, VA.

Dear brother Winters:

I want to thank you so much for the wonderful books you sent. I just received them a few days ago and have been so busy studying the **Porter-Waters Debate.** This is what I have been longing for such a long time. Thank the Lord who gives us brethren who care about others. I want also to tell you this: your **Commentary on Romans** is so good that I just do not know how I can express it to you. I hope you can do the whole Bible. . . . Thanks also for **Carolina Christian** I receive each month, although it takes three or four months to reach me. —D.B. Sibazia, Lusaka Zambia, Alfrica.

For many years the editor has carried on

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a literature ministry at his own expense. He has sent Bibles, books, tract, and papers around the world, including converted denominational preachers, prisoners, missionaries, and foreign native preachers. But because of lack of finances (we have been limited to the small amount made on the sale of books), time (we have our irons in too many fires), and organization (it has been a one-man operation) the work has not even touched a thread in the hem of the garment. The opportunities and possibilities are unlimited, both at home and abroad. Is there someone or a group who would be interested in forming a non-profit organization (to which many could contribute) for the purpose of distributing needed literature? If so, we would gladly work with and through such and provide as many of our own books as possible.

Editorial Book Reviews

Out From Darkness, Ben Alexander; College Press, Joplin, MO; 181 pages, paper $4.95.

The fascinating true story of a medium, who had been reared in a Jewish home, who escaped the occult by becoming a Christian. The book is divided into two sections, the first is autobiographical and tells of his weird and frightening experiences in the occult of spiritualism. The second section's six chapters are on "What You Should Know About Spiritual Darkness." While the Author is totally convinced that the devil is actually working through mediums to perform strange phenomena such as rappings, the ouiga board, meterialization of spirits (by use of ectoplasm from the medium's body), etc. In short, he believes that what happens in many seances are real, not magical tricks. While we do not subscribe to this view, we certainly cannot explain rationally all the things done. Whether or not one agrees with him that evil spirits are still working in and speaking through humans, this is a book he must read for the insight it gives to the dark workings of the occult.

Bible Studies, Vol. 4, R.L. Whiteside; Miss Inyse Whiteside, 1103 Bernard St., Denton, TX 36201; 592 pages, paper — price not given.

Inyse Whiteside has done the cause of Christ a tremendous service by collecting, arranging, and publishing her father's writings. The series of books (six volumes in all, of which this is the 4th) called **Bible Studies** is an orderly arrangement of the work he did in writing quarterlies and annual lesson commentaries for both the **Firm Foundation** (1928-1930) and the **Gospel Advocate** (1933-1944). This large volume, subtitled **The Interwoven Gospels**, covers the four gospels. We are certain that it will become a treasure that you will return to time and again to mine its rich resources. As we have often said, our advice is to read everything Whiteside wrote. He is powerful, straightforward (one never has to wonder where he stands), sound, scholarly, and yet easy to read and comprehend. He loved the Lord, the Bible, and the church, and his great desire was to teach others the truth, God's revealed will. And that he does in this book.

Book Reviews

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

Short Talks Around The Lord's Table, Harry Linn Thomson; Quality Publications, P.O Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 105 pages, paper $3.95.

In this book you find 66 short talks from various sources designed to be used at the Lord's table to help prepare the minds and hearts of the worshippers of God for observing the memorial feast. Its great value is that it will help to break the rut of reading the same four passages of Scripture week after week. Its use can help to restore the appreciation and celebration intended in the memorial of the Lord's Supper, and that is a great need today. This work also contains some brief comments on the crucifixion itself and the words our Savior spoke while He was dying. These short talks are challenging, practical, and Biblical. You will find them also very useful for devotionals and short invitations. It is recommended for every believer and especially church library and the homes of all those who serve at the table.

Managing Church Conflicts, James A. Jones; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 145 pages, paper $5.25.

The subtitle, "Group Theory Applied to the Church Family," suggests for us the approach taken by the author to the subject. This work takes a clinical approach to explaining how to manage conflicts that arise in the church. From a Biblical perspective, the author examines the factors which are relevant to groups striving for spiritual growth. It deals with the group concept in light of the spiritual nature of the church. It deals with the function, emotions, and leadership of groups. The purpose is for the church to gain ideas on ways to solve conflicts and grow strong through them. The author is an experienced marriage, family, and group therapist who serves as a consultant to the church of Christ in Dalton, Georgia. He has seen a need for church leaders to learn how to manage conflicts and for that he offers this book. For that need this book is sincerely recommended.

News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

NORTH CAROLINA

Please send news reports directly to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. All correspondents should note that the Rock Hill Post Office Box has been discontinued. Items for publication must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

Gastonia. A Homecoming has been scheduled for January 12. Property for a new building at a new location has been purchased.

Elizabethtown. Larry Cherry is now working with the Bladen congregation. His telephone is 862-8641.

Raleigh. Brooks Avenue has determined to provide full support for Ernest Stewart in mission work in Israel. On November 10, brother Stewart was in Raleigh for "Mission Sunday." There were 783 in attendance. Local television and papers gave publicity to the plans of the Stewarts and Brooks Avenue.

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Raleigh. There are now 22 brothers at the Polk Youth Center. Brooks Avenue is providing support and encouragement to these young men.

High Point. Eastchester reports over 100 enrolled in Bible correspondence courses during the past year.

Albemarle. Plans have been announced for the 1986 Carolina Lectures, April 7-10. The featured speaker will be Bobby Duncan of Adamsville, Alabama. The theme will be "The Challanges of Christianity."

Hendersonville. Since spring the congregation has given $4,000 to assist in Ethiopian relief and teaching work.

Elizabeth City. Ed Harris has announced plans to move to Grove Hill, Alabama. The Bayside congregation will be seeking a replacement.

Wilson. An urgent appeal is being made for financial help. There is also a need for tracts, Bible correspondence courses and other literature. Larry Scott is working with the Wilson church.

NC Conversions

Northview, Statesville, 1; Roanoke Rapids, 1; Southport, 2; Hendersonville, 2;

Jerico, Mocksville, 1; Redland, Advance, 2; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 26; West Jefferson, 1; Pine Valley, Wilmington, 1; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 2; Elizabeth City, 4. TOTAL: 43.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Bennettsville. After three and a half years with the church in Bennettsville, Eddie Helms will be moving to Tennessee to attend Tennessee Bible College. He will preach for the church in Allons, Tennessee.

Spartanburg. Micky Bell has relocated as pulpit minister in Smithville, Tennessee.

North Charleston. The schedule for the annual South Carolina Lectures is as follows: 1986 Myrtle Beach, 1987 Essex Village, Charleston, 1988 Union. It will be during the second full week of November each year.

Beech Island. On August 11 of this year Christians began meeting in Beech Island, South Carolina for the first time. This area, between Aiken, South Carolina and Augusta, Georgia is home for thousands of families. There are already seven families who are members of the Lord's church and still growng. The first service had an attendance of 18. The contribution was over $1,000. Many great hings can be expected from this fine new church. The members of the church meeting here come from Aiken, Jackson, North Augusta and Beech Island. While they may be dearly missed by their past relationships, he Beech Island church is very fortunate to have the talents of engineers, teachers, elecricians, business owners, talented housewives and eager retirees to help us start. Our meeting location is a storefront on Sandbar Ferry Road. It is located in the fork of the oad between Highway 125 and the Kimberly-Clark turnoff. Many people know this general area as the "HIGHWAY OVERPASS." We are a hundred yards south from the overpass, owards North Augusta.

The Wheeler Road church in Augusta, Georgia has donated our beautiful songbooks and the North Augusta, South Carolina church has provided temporary pulpit preaching on several occasions. Other congregations are being asked to provide finanial support for the first year. Contact them n care of John Beam, 417 Old Trail Road, Beech Island, South Carolina 29841.

Garden City, Orangeburg

QUILLIE BROOKER, REPORTING: Since we began meeting on September 30, 1984, we have had 17 baptisms and our attendance has averaged 42. In 1986, we plan to continue setting up one-on-one Bible studies, following up contacts, and making our visitors welcome. None of the events that have taken place here could have been possible without your financial support. Please pray for us that we may remain stedfast in the faith and continue to work to further the cause of Christ.

South Pinckney Street, Union

ROBERT VANDERFORD, REPORTING: We have just completed a Gospel meeting November 10 through 15 with Brother Keith Tripp from Laurens, South Carolina. We had three restorations and one baptism as a result of this Gospel meeting. We had many visitors from the community and the area congregations around us. May God continue to bless us as we do His will.

SC Conversions

Central, Spartanburg, 1; Pinckney St., Union, 1; Essex Village, Charleston, 3; By-Pass, Union, 2; Garden City, Orangeburg, 17; Myrtle Beach, 1; Northeast, Taylors, 2; Summerville, 3; St. Andrews Rd., Columbia, 2; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill 2. TOTAL: 34.

BILL SMITH REPORTING: We sent $230 to Ethiopian Relief & $100 to Mexico. During October we had a campaign with International Bible College of Florence, Ala. Twelve men and women visited 29 homes and conducted 39 home classes. Willard Pyler, the Academic Dean, did the preaching. We had an average of three area congregations represented each night and other local visitors. For information on a campaign, contact The School at P.O. Box IBC, Florence, Ala. 35630.

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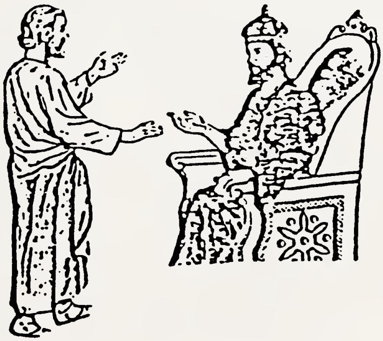
VOL. 28, NO. 1, JANUARY 1986

C289.21/C292

THE KING WHO PASSED SENTENCE ON HIMSELF

2 SAM. 11 & 12

SIN CONCEIVED 11:2
SIN COMMITTED 11:4
SIN COMPLICITY 11:4
SIN CONCEALED 11:6
SIN COMPOUNDED 11:14
SIN CATCH 11:27
SIN CENSURE 12:5
SIN CONDEMNATION 12:5
SIN CONVICTION 12:7
SIN CONTEMPT 12:9
SIN CONFESSED 12:13
SIN COVERED 12:13
SIN CONSEQUENCES 12:10-14



THE FOURFOLD SENTENCE

GAL. 6:7F; EX. 20:5;
PROV. 13:15

BEREAVEMENT 12:15FF
RAPE 13:11FF
MURDER 13:28FF
INSURRECTION 15-18

— David Pharr

(See page 4)

editorial

IMMEDIATE PRICE INCREASE

It is a bad way to start off the new year, but if **Carolina Christian** survives we have no choice. The printers have again slapped us with a 25% increase in our printing bill. Since we were not making ends meet with the old price, there is no possibility of absorbing even a part of this increase from cutting overhead or from a working fund (which we do not have). Thus we are faced with undesirable alternatives: we must either increase prices by 25% or else we must fold up and quit. But at **Carolina Christian** we were not made from the quitting stock. Thus beginning with the February issue (and February billings) subscription rates will be as follows:

Single subscription, $7.00 per year.
Clubs of five or more, $6.50 each per year.
Bundles and mailing lists, 40¢ per copy.
Extra copies, 40¢ each.

We do not like this any more than you do. But what else can we do? This is a good work and worth far more than even the new cost. We believe that it must continue. So we appeal to all our subscribers to remain with us, make the extra sacrifice, and let us work together to advance the cause of Christ . . . and to build an even greater paper. The future needs **Carolina Christian**. We would do it an injustice to let it die now. (Until we are able to get the February issue into your hands, approximately one month from now, we will accept both new subscriptions and renewals at the old price, and that for as long as you wish to subscribe, up to 10 years.)

COMING SOON — COMMENTARY ON FIRST CORINTHIANS

The manuscript of our commentary on 1 Corinthians is now finished and the Board of Directors has approved its publication as soon as the financial means are available (that is as soon as we can see our way clear financially, hopefully early this year). As soon as we are able to turn it over to the printers an announcement will be made and a prepublication offer will be extended. Because it is almost a third larger than Romans the price will have to be more. However, we are committed to keeping the price as low as possible and we hope to be able to market it for $7.95 and offer it at a prepublication price of $6.00 or at the most, $6.50. If so, then we will also make it available to churches or individuals who purchase 10 or more copies at an even lower price.

In the meantime there are two ways you can help. (1) Purchase as many of Romans as possible. Every penny received for the sale of this book will go into the fund looking toward the publication of 1 Corinthians. (2) If there are those who are sold enough on the Commentary and on the future of **Carolina Christian** to make a contribution toward its publication, we would be glad to receive it. Such a contribution would not only help us get on our feet financially now, it would pay rich dividends for many years to come. For a contribution of $25.00 or more we will

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EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION STAFF:

Howard Winters, Editor; David Pharr, Carolina News Editor; Dennis Conner, Brotherhood News Editor, Johnny Melton, Carolina Pulpit Editor.

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All items to be printed in a given month's issue should reach the editor not later than the next to the last Thursday of the preceding month.

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send you an autographed copy of the book as soon as it is ready and list your name as a donor in **Carolina Christian.** For your information, neither the editor nor anyone else gets one cent for this work. The manuscript has been contributed to **Carolina Christian** (for the first printing) and all proceeds will go to the paper to help it become self-sustaining. We can certainly use your help now and if you give it we pledge ourselves to work to make your contribution yield the most possible for the cause of Christ.

We are convinced that once we get 1 Corinthians out we can then carry our own load (but with ever-increasing cost, that remains yet to be seen). But at least, it will be a giant step in the right direction.

KEEPING THE FAITH

We recently took time out to watch the mini series on television called Mussolini — The Untold Story. While we were not greatly impressed with its overall value, there was one incident that made a deep impression on our minds. His daughter's husband had voted against Mussolini and was eventually arrested and was certain to be put to death. She pleaded with her father to pardon him, appealing to him that the war was lost anyway and that this additional slaughter would serve no purpose. Mussolini refused and gave for his reason the following philosophy: "We must keep faith with our ideals."

Mussolini's ideals were despicable, ideals conceived in depraved minds and advanced at the cost of human freedom. But not so with our faith. Christianity offers the highest ideals known to man. It is based upon man being made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). But he sinned (violated his Creator's law and his creative purpose) and marred that image. To redeem him from the penalty (which is eternal death) Jesus, the divine Son of God, came into the world, lived a perfect life, died a vicarious death, was buried, rose from the dead, and then ascended back to God from whom He came. All this to provide the means of human redemption. Those He purchased with His blood, He called out of the world to be a kingdom of priests (Rev. 1:6, ASV), priests to serve Him day and night. The called-out are His church (Matt. 16:18), His family (1 Tim. 3:15), His blood-purchased (Acts 20:28). They are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14-16) and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13). Their mission is to save souls (both theirs and others). And they are to love, even their enemies (Matt. 5:44-47), with an unconditional love — a love that respects every person as a being made in God's image. But there is more: to the Christian this world is not his home. It is only a dressing room in which to prepare for eternity. His hope is on higher things. Thus he lives not for this world, with its material things and fading honors, but for the world to come and a crown that fades not away (1 Pet. 5:4).

This only touches the highlights of a few fundamental ideals of the Christian system. But these should be enough to show that they are superior to all earthly systems, philosophies, and ideals, esteemed and valued enough to keep the faith for. But as valuable as they are, most of them are under severe attack by evil-minded unbelievers. In our present situation there are enemies both within and without the church. The battle lines are drawn and we must fight or surrender. The Lord has promised a sure victory to those who will be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). Shall we keep faith with our ideals or shall we turn back and walk with Him no more? Each of us must make the decision on every battle front, whether it be for the inerrancy of the word or on pure moral living. The Christian has but two alternatives: he must keep faith with his ideals or else he must compromise the highest ideals ever known to this old sinful world.

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The King Who Passed Sentence on Himself

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

The points on the chart are taken from the story of David's sin, recorded in 2 Samuel 11 and 12.

When David looked lustfully at Bathsheba this was **sin conceived** (11:2). In keeping with the prognosis of James 1:14-15, next there was **sin committed** (11:4). But David's immorality involved Bathsheba. His was not the only soul to be ruined. This is **sin's complicity.**

David attempted to have his **sin concealed** (11:6ff. Cf. Prov. 28:13; Lk. 12:2). This led to **sin compounded** (11:14ff). What began with lust has led to murder. It seemed, though, that his plan was working. Bathsheba moves into the palace. "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord" (11:27). That was **sin's catch.**

As David listened to Nathan's tragic account of the rich man's callous disregard of his poor neighbor's rights, he became infuriated. Though he had quieted his conscience against his own crime, he was indignant when he heard of the sin of another. Sin looks blacker in the other person. This is **sin's censure.**

Sin's condemnation is death (12:5. Cf. Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 6:23). The guilty man would repay the lamb fourfold (12:6. Cf. Ex. 22:1).

Sin's conviction followed the prophet's "Thou art the man" (12:7). Nathan showed **sin's contempt** of God's commandment (12:9) and of God Himself (12:10).

The heart of David is touched and we read of his **sin confession** (12:13) and in keeping with divine principles of justice and mercy we learn that **sin** is **covered** (12:13. Cf. Rom. 4:7).

But even **sin** forgiven may have temporal **consequences.** Nathan showed this in predicting the death of the child (12:14). It was also shown in predictions of verses 10-11.

When David judged the man who stole the lamb he said he would restore it fourfold. The king passed sentence on himself. In the years that followed four grievous tragedies came to David's life — the death of the child

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(12:15ff); the rape of Tamar (13); the revenge murder of Ammon (13:28ff); and the insurrection and death of Absalom (15-18). Doubtless the conscience of David ached bitterly over each tragedy as he remembered the immorality and murder he had himself committed.

Sin must have its consequences. See Galatians 6:7-8; Exodus 20:5; Proverbs 13:15. Truly, "the way of transgressors is hard."

Springboard for Discussion

"Worthy Art Thou!"

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

Some time ago, there was a disturbing ripple made in some brethren's pool of thought. In reaction to certain songs sung regularly in church, some declared that proper prayer could not be made to Jesus. Therefore, what songs encouraged this (and there are many) were also improper, they concluded. Beloved,let us carefully examine what we believe about worshipping Jesus Christ.

First, let us not draw the conclusion that Jesus is the only Person of the Godhead (Matt. 3:16-17). Such a conclusion is patently false.

Second, let us understand that **no creature** is worthy to be worshipped. To do so demonstrates willful ignorance of God (Rom. 1:22-25). Neither good men (Acts 10:25-26) nor good angels (Rev. 22:8-9) accepted it.

Third, Jesus Christ is Himself God — Deity — who did accept worship many times. Surely we understand that as Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the only begotten Son of God, He is by nature Deity. He is: (1) The Word who was God, that became flesh (John 1:1, 14). (2) God with us (Matt. 1:23). (3) The one who was in the form of God and equal to Him (Phil. 2:6). (4) Called God, the Lord who lives forever (Heb. 1:8-12). (5) The brightness of God's glory and the express image of God's person (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15). (6) The fullness of the Godhead in bodily form (Col. 2:9).

A word used repeatedly in Matthew is **prosquneo.** It means "to worship." It is what Satan demanded of Jesus in the wilderness and what Jesus said belonged only to the Lord your God (Matt. 4:9-10). Now please listen, brethren. This word describes some seven times what people did to Jesus which He boldly accepted (Matt. 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:17; Luke 24:52; John 9:38).

Jesus was prayed to by Stephen (Acts 7:59) and John (Rev. 22:20). John said that Jesus encouraged His disciples to petition Him (John 14:14). He is offered praise (Rev. 5:13). Paul gave thanks to Him (1 Tim. 1:12). Angels were commanded to worship Him (Heb. 1:6). And God the Father will have every creature to bow and confess to Jesus' Lordship (Phil. 2:9-11). This we must understand: to worship Jesus does not deprive the Father; it glorifies Him. For it honors His ordination and exaltation of Jesus, His Son (John 5:22-23; 14:13).

Some wish to make the point that Jesus is not the object of worship in the New Testament but rather is only the mediator between us and the Father, who is the object of our adoration. All this they see in Colossians 3:17, "giving thanks to God the Father through Him." But, dear brethren, the mediation of Jesus (and He is truly the only mediator) does not outlaw worship to Jesus. It declares that only as we bow to Jesus as the supreme authority (an aspect of worship) will God the Father give us an audience. We worship the Son to find gracious acceptance by the Father (John 16:26-27; Ps. 2:12).

If one acknowledges that worshipping Jesus Christ is acceptable according to the New Testament, then prayer to Jesus must be acceptable. If one denies the acceptability of prayer to Jesus, then grave questions must be answered: (1) Do we doubt Jesus' divinity? (2) Do we question the Scriptures? (3) Do we question the example of Stephen, Paul, and John? (4) Do we think God is slighted some way even though He commanded creation to worship Jesus? (5) Could the saints of old worship in a way which we for some reason cannot now do? What then happens to the restoration of New Testament worship? Where is the Scripture that makes the difference?

Of course, prayer to the Father is valid (Acts 4:24-30), but so is prayer to Christ. There is still only one God, for there is only one nature of Deity, a Deity that is one in all aspects of unity (John 17:5, 21-24). That is exactly why prayer to the Lord Jesus is acceptable.

Though denominations may abuse it, though we may not be used to it, let us never be found guilty of depriving our Lord of that which is rightfully His. Nor let us rebuke others who are guiltless. We are not infidels but Christians (Heb. 13:7-8).

Focusing Our Faith

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

Although it is not always recognized as such, Christianity is the following of a person, Jesus Christ. It is not the following of a doctrine (although it includes that); it is following the person whom that doctrine is about. Paul said, "I know whom I have believed." (2 Tim. 1:12.)

In seeking to restore New Testament Christianity, surely the place to start is with Jesus! Even we who claim the restoration heritage could benefit in restoring Jesus, not so much in terms of what we refer to as "doctrine" but in terms of restoring Jesus as the focus of our faith. We seem to have the tendency to be like Peter as he stepped out to meet Jesus on the water: we get distracted by the wind and the waves and take our eyes off Jesus.

The focal point of the New Testament church was Jesus! It was entered by believing in Jesus (Acts 16:31), repenting because of the forgiveness of sins preached in His name (Luke 24:47), confessing Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10), and being baptized into Him (Gal. 3:26-27).

Christians were exhorted to pattern their relationships around Christ (Rom. 15:7; Eph. 5:1-2), work on their jobs for Him (Col. 3:22-24), rejoice in Him (Phil. 4:4), suffer for Him (1 Pet. 2:21ff) and even die in Him (1 Thess. 4:14). Truly, the New Testament church was centered around Christ!

Even when there were "doctrinal controversies" the church kept Jesus as the focus of their faith. Read about the day/meat/wine issue in Romans 14-15 and note how many times the names Jesus, Christ, or Lord are mentioned. Note how Paul starts off his discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 with reference to Jesus. Or consider the Hebrew writer's admonition to a group of people confused about the covenants that they fix their eyes on Jesus (12:2), consider Him (12:3) and how He remains the same (13:8). None of these writers ignored the "doctrinal problems" that existed but they addressed these problems without taking their eyes off Jesus!

That's the perspective we need today. We need to learn to keep Jesus at the focal point of our faith. Whether we are addressing the lost or the saved, the right or the wrong, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus. Teach the system but center it around the Savior. Preach the plan but only as it relates to the Man. This will yield healthy, well-balanced, mature Christians (Eph. 4:13-16). It will produce congregations that are not only sound but are also appealing to the lost because they hold forth the Bread of Life for which the world is hungering rather than offering up a diet of dry diatribes. Let us keep Jesus as the focus of our faith.

"And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him." (Luke 5:11.)

The Christian and Preaching

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." (2 Tim. 4:1-5, NKJV.)

How do we respond to God when we hear His word being preached? Do we ignore it and do nothing, as those who do not hear it all? Do we become angry and argue with God? Do we become defensive, feel we are being attacked, and then make justification? Or, are we among those who are challenged to do something by it, our conscience stirred to obey the truth that is preached?

Quite often this passage of Scripture is used to deal with the trouble of false doctrine within the brotherhood and within the world whole, and rightly so. But, this text also confronts the issue of selfishness, that of doing anything the way we want to do it rather than as God has already commanded it to be done. This would cover everything from how we worship to how we work on our jobs, to how we raise our children and behave in public. So, what is to be our relationship to God in response to hearing His word preached?

God wants His word preached. God the judge and Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior are called in to witness this charge to preach. Preaching prepares man for judgment (Matt. 7:24-27). Preaching also brings man into salvation (1 Cor. 1:21). So, it is good for us to hear God's word preached.

All who have ears have the responsibility to hear, believe, and obey the truth heard (Matt. 17:5). If the preacher is charged to preach God's word, then it is because we have the charge to listen to it, learn it, and live it. It should be our desire to be taught the whole counsel of God because we want to be right in every way. So, when God's word is preached, what is our disposition towards it?

Now, how does God intend for His word to be preached? God would work to do us good through the preaching of His word. So, the preacher is to be ready to deal with the need when it arises, to convince men and women of God's truth, to identify the sin that is in us, to encourage the hearer to pursue a right course in life, and with a tireless temperament and a mind that knows God's counsel. So, we as hearers have the responsibility to openly hear, believe, and obey God, and to correct the sin that God would be confronting. We are to do this with a willing temperament and do not become angry or threatened at God's word. We must have a determined mind that does not make excuses for our behavior or argue with God's word. We know that God is right and we gladly accept His word.

This passage also teaches that God wants His word heard. The pulpit is not to be used as a billy club or a witness stand, but rather a lighthouse or a watchtower. It is a lighthouse to guide in the paths of righteousness for the good life. It is a watchtower to warn us of the sin that is in us and around us that will threaten and condemn our souls. So, there is no reason to take offense at God's word (John 3:21). We would not be afraid to hear it.

If we do take offense it is because our ears are itching and God does not scratch them (John 3:18-20). In fact, some preachers are made to leave one pulpit for another because the hearers want a teacher who will scratch that itch, twist the truth into being what they want it to be. But, the preacher is to be firm and strong with God's word for that very reason that he is not to be swayed by their lusts. So, we should expect to hear God's truth from the pulpit, not the stroking of our conscience to make us feel at ease in our sin. Our way of doing things may be wrong, but God will not compromise. If we stand with God's word, we stand with God and we are right. If we turn to our own lusts and reject the truth when we take offense at the preaching, we are wrong.

Therefore, the preacher is charged with responsibility to be faithful to his duty. He must have a spirit of courage (Gal. 4:16) and loyalty (1 Tim. 4:15-16) so that he hold nothing back. Why? We need God's word! It will be his salvation and ours (Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 4:12-13).

Are you upset or challenged by the truth? One disposition will result in the slavery and condemnation of sin, the other in the freedom and salvation of righteousness. The choice is your own. What will it be?

Are You Ready for Battle?

Albert Gardner, Spartanburg, SC

I am not a prophet of doom. Most of the time I am rather optimistic about the present and future. Even when conditions seem dark, it has been my nature, most of the time, to see the silver lining. Phillips translates 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, "We are handicapped on all sides but we are never frustrated: we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but we never have to stand it alone: we may be knocked down but we are never knocked out!"

In most ways the future of the church has never been better. We have unparalleled opportunities at home and abroad. We have well-trained teachers for public, private, and class teaching. The level of giving is unsurpassed. The spirit of compassion and evangelism is good.

But realism makes us face the facts. We cannot live in a fantasy world and think that everything is 100 percent okay in the church. For several years now the denominations have been having a revolution. Some have accepted change. Some have merged. Some have declined. Some are fighting in order to hold on. I believe what they have been facing has now affected the church of our Lord. We will not give up, give in, and by the grace of God we won't give out. We will not compromise.

What is open to us? Fight. Stand. In the church we have more preachers and members than we would like to think who are ready to have fellowship with the Christian Church. It appears to me that there is an attempt to have unity simply by ignoring all of the damage, division, heartache, and shame brought on by those who introduced instrumental music into the worship. The "unity meetings" are designed to have unity without a change of views and without repentance. We can never be a party to such a "union" and at the same time be true to all the Bible says about unity.

Be ready for the battle on instrumental music again. And while you are preparing, study up on the purpose of baptism. Be sure to study the divorce-remarriage issue which is troubling many churches. Never would I have dreamed when I began preaching more than thirty-five years ago that we would have those in the church who would claim they have the baptism of the Holy Spirit and can speak in tongues.

If the compromising spirit of the "unity meetings" especially portrayed by some under the claim of love . . . if it succeeds, the church will have a new image. It will be restructured. It will have given up ground which was gained through hard-fought battles by those who loved the truth of God and stood for it in the hour of need. It will become a different church.

I refuse to yield. I want unity and pray and work for it, but only on the basis of the word of God. As a whole, I believe our brotherhood feels this way and will remain faithful. But train for the battle which I believe is sure to come.

"Ask for the old paths and walk in that way." (Jer. 6:16.)

The ONE Fold

Don Nix, Union, SC

In John 10:1-18 Jesus speaks concerning the Shepherd (Jesus), the one fold (the one church), thieves and robbers (the first word means a sneak thief who obtains his booty by subtlety; the second is a brigand who obtains his by violence), and the hireling (those who serve as long as they are benefitted with little or no discomfort on their part). Although these probably are more directly applicable to the time in which Jesus walked the earth, it is sad to note that the thief, robber and hireling still exist today. Many congregations have suffered the ravages of those who come in with subtlety ("good words and fair speeches," Romans 16:18). Others have seen congregations wrestled away from them by the overpowering robbers. There are also those who have had no end of trouble created by those who only look out for themselves and not the church or the Lord, only to abandon the cause when the going got too rough for them. Of course, many times the thief, robber and hireling have all been found in one individual.

In John 17 Jesus worded a moving prayer to His Father for the oneness of all His followers. We realize, of course, that He recognized the different characteristics of men and that in some areas various opinions would arise. In those areas where the Bible speaks we must be one. But we know that this is not always the case. Often personalities clash, false doctrines are taught or immorality, etc., may create division. A problem arose in Corinth with members aligning themselves with certain individuals and Paul said that "contentions" (strife, debate) existed in the church. They had taken their eyes off the Chief Shepherd and had begun to follow men even though those men were not seeking followers for themselves but God. Much of the division today seems to be caused by men seeking others who will support them in their thoughts and actions.

All division is wrong! Division drives a wedge between brethren and establishes a condition where fellowship no longer exists between the two groups. Jesus said there is "one fold" (John 10:16), but division makes it two folds. Now either one is right and the other is wrong or they are both wrong. Division simply cannot exist and both be right! Where is the error? Brethren who divide churches need to point out the sin over which they saw the need to split the Lord's body and deny the Lord's prayer in John 20. If the elders of a congregation are leading the congregation into sinful practices, they should urge them to repent and if they do not, they should be removed. If you cannot remove them, then you may choose to go elsewhere. This does not give you the right to "drum up support" for your side and split the church (which does nothing to contribute to the good name of the church on either side in the community). The saddest thing of all is that churches are split more often than not over the desire for authority by preachers. They may believe in the beginning that elders have the right to hire a preacher and may praise them so highly you would think they were angels, but let the elders object to one or more of their pet projects and they become unqualified, if not reprobates. If the elders decide that it is time for a change, some preachers, who were hired by the elders, will kick up a ruckus and stir up the congregation to the point of division. "You don't have the authority to fire me! If you do I'll split the church." No one likes to be asked to leave a congregation, but those interested in what is best for the Lord's church will bow out gracefully and work to promote the future unity of the church. Once a preacher or individual begins to sow the seeds of discord he can usually obtain an ear and from that point on the elders may labor diligently to restore order but the damage has been done, often resulting in a full-blown split. Many good brethren and sisters are carried away in the division because of family, transportation or various other reasons. The world looks on and observes, "And they want us to be a part of that church?" This writer cannot blame them and, in fact, can have nothing to do with any congregations created and continued out of division.

Paul commanded the church at Ephesus to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3.) Should not this be the job of all Christians? But in following the history of some we find divided churches, either meeting in the same building or different ones, all along the way. It would seem to be their goal in life.

In the great wisdom of God churches are commanded to appoint qualified men to be overseers of the work of each local congregation. Preachers of all people should understand this principle and yield themselves to it. If they cannot work with a particular eldership then let them find a place of service elsewhere and leave that work alone. Whatever the case may be let us never divide the church over non-doctrinal matters.

The writer urges all those contemplating division or who are involved in congregations created out of a divisive spirit to ask themselves, "What have I done to the Lord's body and will He be pleased by it?" Please repent and return to the Lord while you have the time and opportunity.

The Rules of Life

John A. Thurman, Asheville, NC

James warns Christians not to boast about what is going to happen tomorrow: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit' whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." (James 4:13-14.) It is a common expression that we often hear someone say: "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today." The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:2b, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The writer of Matthew gave the command not to worry about life and gives examples of how God takes care of the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, and the grass of the field. Jesus, the speaker in this Sermon on the Mount, reveals what man should do instead of worrying about what he is going to eat, drink, or wear tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Jesus commands us instead to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things [what we eat, what we drink, and what we wear] shall be added to you." (Matt. 6:25-34.) In preparation for the kingdom of God we must "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matt. 7:13-14.)

Those who travel the broad path in life are not too concerned most of the time about other travelers on their path, except perhaps their own relatives or friends. We can see the men of the world following their own set of rules or selfish habits exhibited by the world-at-large. **One** rule of man is to practice that "Might is right" or that "The right is might." Since I have more money or strength, I will push the little guy out of the way and take charge. Or, I am in a position of rank in society or in my position as employer to treat the other guys or my subordinates just the way I want to; I will make them toe the line; I will set the pace or I will have my way or burst. A **second** rule is to "Do it to him before he can do it to you"; that is, beat him to the punch. I will beat him in the line; I will grab my thing and push ahead; I will take advantage of the situation before he has a chance; I will grab his suggestion and use it before he can use it. A **third** rule of man is to practice the rule: "All that is legal or legally right, I will follow." I am interested in doing just what I have to do — nothing more or nothing less — on my job, at church, in my community, or in my contact in whatever way with my fellowman. This rule is well illustrated in Luke 10:25-37 in the story (or parable) of the Good Samaritan. Living under a law of works and not caring for the individual who had been stripped and wounded by thieves on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, the priest and the Levite passed by on the other side, while the Samaritan, a man of a different nationality, perhaps a half-breed, saw the man and took pity on him. If someone needed help (and we know it), would we be compared to the priest and the Levite and pass by on the other side and go on down the road?

In the New Testament I believe God gives us many godly rules to follow. Among them are three rules I believe every true disciple should seek to follow. **First** is the Golden Rule: "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 7:12, NKJV.) Commonly we say, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Man has a threefold duty: one to God, one to his fellowman, and one to himself. The Good Samaritan is an example of this kind of individual. **Second** is the Pearl Rule. It is found in the book of Philippians (2:3): "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." One good example of this is seen in the life of the Apostle Paul. On one occasion in writing to the Christians at Rome he said: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." (Rom. 12:10.) In Philippians 2:20-30 Timothy had practiced this high rule in his Christian walk, such as toward the Apostle Paul. In turn Paul complimented the great worth and esteem he had for Timothy. Therefore, we must see the good in others and do likewise: compliment them. The **third** and last rule is what we may call the Diamond Rule. It is perhaps the most difficult rule to keep and it is found in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:43-47. Jesus said: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do so?" No matter who these people are — foreign or domestic — no matter what they do to us, no matter how much they persecute us, no matter who they may harm or make threats about or of, we must return good for evil. This high rule of Christianity (God) is the most difficult to keep. How easy it is not to have "self-control"; yet this is one of the things we must do (2 Pet. 1:6) to gain an abundant entrance into "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Sometimes it is more difficult to keep the Diamond Rule among our domestic people or our acquaintances that we come in contact with in our own city than it is to practice this rule regarding enemies who live in distant lands. Yet remember the words of Jesus in Pilate's court found in John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." Any time there is a commandment that may conflict with man's rules or laws "we must obey God rather than men." When there is no conflict Jesus teaches us in His word to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Study also Romans 13 and if there is opportunity, read David Lipscomb's book, **Civil Government.**

Do you as a child of God, an heir of the kingdom, one who is desirous of entering the everlasting kingdom when Jesus appears from heaven, keep to the best of your ability the Golden, the Pearl, and the Diamond Rules found in God's holy word?

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Children Can't Live by Bread Alone

John Waddey, Knoxville, TN

When tempted by Satan, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.) The same is true with children. America's children have more of the material things of the world than the kids of any other nation. Yet it is also true that many of our children are deprived of the very things that make life worth living. Every child has a right to that moral and spiritual training that will teach him how to serve God acceptably, how to live with his fellowman and how to prepare for eternity.

I. Every child deserves a Christian home. The adjective "Christian" suggests a home where Christ is respected and obeyed, where his New Covenant is the standard of conduct. A Christian home is guided by Christian parents. In such a home there will be an active program of training and instruction in the Christian virtues and graces. The ethical standards of Christ will be planted in the children's minds even while they are young, and reinforced daily. A Christian atmosphere of love, concern and responsibility will permeate a Christian home. Nothing is more harmful to a child's emotional health than to be continually exposed to hostility and outbursts of anger. Not only does such frighten and upset the child, he grows up assuming this to be the normal and correct way to respond to his fellowman.

II. To have a basis to build his moral and spiritual values upon, every child needs to be taught the Holy Scriptures. In giving God's law to the Hebrews, Moses commanded, "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children. . . ." (Deut. 6:6-7.) It is the God-imposed duty of the parents to nurture their little ones in the "chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). One of the best ways to accomplish this is to have a daily Bible reading program in the home. For small children it would help to use a Bible story book which takes selected Bible episodes and retells them on a child's level. Children need to be taught to memorize verses of Scripture that relate to life and service. Important sections of Scripture should be learned by heart such as the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12), the Ten Commandments (Deut. 5:7-21), the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-11), the Christian Graces (2 Pet. 1:3-8), the Christian Code of Love (1 Cor. 13:1-8). Youngsters need help to learn the various books of the Bible and the key characters and events of it if they are going to enjoy studying it and appreciate the value thereof. They must be able to observe in their parents love and respect for the Scriptures if they are expected to do so themselves. Each child should have his own Bible at an early age and be taught its importance to life and to take care of it.

III. Every child has the right to be taught how to pray to his God and Creator. Parents whose child is slow in learning to talk and communicate are usually very concerned and will consult a physician to determine if the child has a problem. How much more concerned should we be that our youngsters learn to communicate with their heavenly Father. While prayer is certainly commanded (1 Thess. 5:12), it should rather well up as a bubbling spring within our hearts. Teach your toddlers simple prayers for meals and bedtime. As they grow older, teach them to express prayers of thanksgiving, praise and request. To pray acceptably they need to learn to pray through Christ, our only mediator (John 14:14; 1 Tim. 2:5). They must be taught to pray in accordance with God's will (Matt. 26:39) since we could not expect God to give us things contrary to His will. As in other areas, children learn first and best by imitation. Your children need to see their parents earnestly praying to God in the home. That lesson will be indelibly stamped upon their hearts.

IV. To be taken to worship and Bible

School is the right of every child. Since "each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12), we must have opportunity to know the Lord and how we should live before Him. Is it not strange that parents will recognize the children's need for secular education and training, but wholly ignore the same need in the spiritual realm? If you expect your son or daughter to live a respectable, exemplary life, you must see that they receive that spiritual training that will guarantee such. Only when they are trained up in the right way will they walk in it (Proverbs 22:6).

Parents who want their youngsters to have the best that life can offer will see that the family regularly worships the Lord with His congregation. A child is blest indeed who has such in his weekly routine. As he learns to honor God he will also honor his father and mother and respect his fellowman.

V. When your child grows into adolescence he will become conscious of his moral responsibility to God's law. His transgression will arouse guilt in his tender heart. At that point in life he or she needs to know God's plan for forgiveness and redemption. All must learn of Jesus and trust Him as their Lord and Savior (Rom. 10:17; John 8:24). They must be encouraged to acknowledge their sins to God and resolve to overcome them. This God calls repentance (Acts 17:30). When they are prepared to publicly confess Christ as Lord, they should be immersed with Christ in the water of baptism (Rom. 6:3-4). Upon so doing God will wash away their sins (Acts 2:47). No greater joy will come to you as parent than witnessing your child's baptism into Christ. With your patient help and guidance they can be faithful until death and receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

Remember: To live the abundant life, your child must have more than bread alone.

Thoughts to Ponder

Investigate, Then Conclude!

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

"Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, we have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, come and see." (John 1:44-46.)

When Philip, one of the first disciples of Jesus, told Nathanael about finding Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth," the son of Joseph, Nathanael asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip's reply was simple and to the point: "Come and see." Although Nathanael was to some extent prejudiced against anyone who lived in Nazareth, he was, nevertheless, willing to accept the challenge which Philip placed before him. He did as Philip suggested, and he was overwhelmingly convinced that Philip had indeed found the Son of God, the King of Israel. No person should ever allow himself to get into a condition which makes him unwilling to consider the merits of any proposition involving the truth, and which vitally affects his eternal welfare. He should personally investigate before coming to his conclusion.

The Lesson Brought Down to Date. This incident involving Philip and Nathanael should be encouragement for Christians to suggest to their neighbors and friends that they "come and see" that which we, who claim to speak where the Bible speaks, and to remain silent where the Bible is silent, teach and practice in our worship services and in our everyday lives. There are many good, religious people who misunderstand the position of the Church of Christ on many questions, because it has been misrepresented to them; and in some instances those who did the misrepresenting thought themselves honest about the matter. It is easy for one to misrepresent a proposition when it is remembered that there is only a short step between misunderstanding and misrepresentation. But any thoughtful and intelligent person should always be willing to investigate before drawing his conclusion. After Jesus had cleansed the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and drove those who exchanged out of the temple He was asked what authority He had for doing this. Jesus told them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you will raise it up in three days? But He spoke of the temple of His body and when He was raised from the dead His disciples remembered this statement." (See John 2:13-22.)

Honest People Are Fair and Open-Minded. The Jews thought Jesus was talking about a temple built with hands, but they refused to ask Him about the expression before they criticized Him. Any fair-minded person will readily admit that the enemies of Jesus were manifestly unfair to Him when they used His words with a meaning that they attached to them against Him at His trial. Matthew 26:59-61 says, "Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false testimony against Jesus that they might put Him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it again in three days." His enemies had reference to the temple in which people worshipped; but any discerning person knows that Jesus did not have that temple in mind; and to try to make it appear that He did, because of that which He said, was utterly unfair to Him and wholly untrue to the facts. Jesus declares in John 8:32 that the truth shall make one free; but the person who is sincerely seeking for the truth must realize that it is just as necessary for him to be honest intellectually as it is for him to be honest in the material things of life. It is easy, by means of a few small alterations, or with a different meaning attached to one's words, to make it appear that he is teaching something different from that which was actually taught. People who do things like that nearly always try to state the other person's views in their words and with a meaning ascribed to his words which they, and not he, attached to them. The rules of interpretation which are of common acceptance among fair-minded students require that no expression which is not clear to the reader or hearer shall be made to mean something that is contrary to the general teaching of the author or speaker, unless he makes it plain that he meant to teach something that is different from and contrary to his known position. An investigation is always warranted before a proper conclusion can be reached.

Misunderstanding and Misrepresenting. Where there is a misunderstanding it is easy to misrepresent; but if one is honest in his misrepresentation he will always be glad to consider the facts in the case, when they are called to his attention. He will be just as glad to correct the false impression which he made as he was to make it in the first place. Those who claim membership in the New Testament church and who endeavor to **speak where the Bible speaks,** and to **remain silent where it is silent,** have frequently been misrepresented with reference to their teaching and their practice. Inasmuch as I stand identified with the Church of Christ, I shall write in the first person (plural) of some of these misunderstood and misrepresented positions.

1. **It has been said by some that we have discarded the Old Testament altogether.** If they are willing to **come and see,** they will learn that our position with reference to the Old Testament is precisely the position of the New Testament itself. Some of these New Testament Scriptures which we hold to on the matter are: Romans 15:4: "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope." Also 1 Corinthians 10:11: "Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come." Further Hebrews 1:1-2: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world." The people of God during the age of Moses were God's church for that period (Acts 7:38) and they had the Old Testament as their law; and in

like manner, the people of God during the age of Christ are His church for this period. "But Christ was faithful over God's house as a Son. And we are His house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope." (Heb. 3:6.)

2. **Others have said that we do not believe in the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion.** They leave the impression that we teach against the work in this respect. We believe that every case of conversion is brought about by the Holy Spirit, but we do not believe that the Spirit operates directly in the matter of conviction and conversion, separate and apart from the written word of God. The Spirit always does such work through the divinely chosen medium, the revealed word of God. To state that a person is saved by direct action on the part of the Holy Spirit is to say that man really has no part in the matter and this defies God's word that man is a free moral agent with the right to choose or reject the saving grace of Jesus Christ. John 6:44-45 reads, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me." Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

3. **It has been advanced that we do not believe in prayer.** This is a gross misrepresentation, for our practice plainly shows that we do believe in prayer. We do not, however, believe in asking God to do something for people which He has not promised to do, for example, forgive alien sins in answer to prayer. "If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Prov. 28:9.) Prayer is a blessed privilege which belongs to God's people. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another that he may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (John 5:16.) But one does not become a child of God simply through prayer. Saul of Tarsus and Cornelius both prayed before they became Christians, but they did not stop there; they were told what to do in order to be saved (Acts 11:14; 22:10, 16; and James 1:21).

4. **Some have asserted that we do not believe in a change of heart or heartfelt religion.** If anyone who thinks this will **come and see,** with an open heart and investigate for himself, he will learn that we not only believe and teach heartfelt religion, but that we teach that the whole heart must be changed. We teach that the intellectual processes must be changed! Romans 10:9-10 states, "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved." We believe that the emotional processes must also be changed! Matthew 22:37 reads, "And He said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." We believe that a person's will or his determination to make choices must be changed! Acts 11:23 says, "When he [Barnabas] came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose." 1 Corinthians 7:37: "But whosoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as betrothed, he will do well." We deeply believe that the conscience must be changed! Acts 2:37 proclaims, "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" 1 John 3:20-21 reads, "For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God." **This is much further than most religious teachers are willing to go or do in discussing the change of heart or heartfelt religion.**

5. **Finally, it has been alleged by some that the Church of Christ denies the cleansing power and sureness of the blood of Christ, and teaches only water salvation.** If those who suggest this claim will **come and see,** they will learn that we teach that it is only through the blood of Christ that sins can be forgiven. Ephesians 1:7 states, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to His

grace." Hebrews 9:14 reads, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." We further teach that it is only through obedience that one comes in contact with the cleansing blood! "Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness. But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standards of teaching to which you were committed, and having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." (Rom. 6:16-18.)

Christ, indeed, died for all men: But who wants to affirm that all men will be saved? Only the obedient will enjoy His salvation! Christ in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 6, and 7) stated, "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? And then will I declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers."

In conclusion, we state that the church that Christ established is greatly misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misquoted today even as it was in the first century. Why this should be so we do not know, except perhaps man in the religion of his choice elects to accept something other than that found in the divine Scriptures because what he accepts is more pleasing to the human side of his makeup. If these good folks would just "come and see" they would realize that the church of our Lord is misunderstood and misinterpreted without justification. A thorough investigation is absolutely essential before an intelligent, factual, and truthful conclusion can be made.

Thoughts to Ponder

Suffering as a Christian

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

The world is constantly perplexed by human suffering. Why? Sooner or later suffering comes to all. All have an appointment with death which must be kept (Heb. 9:27). Let us face it, we are not going to get out of this world alive. But all suffering is not bad. What if the human body could not feel pain? Pain is the body's alarm system which lets us know when something goes wrong. Romans 8:28 is a marvelous verse for the Christian. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." Notice, (1) it does not say that all things work together for our convenience, our comfort, and pleasure — but for our good! (2) But we must love God and be called according to His purpose. We must be consecrated and unreservedly devoted to the Lord. Every situation in life is a challenge for the Christian. If he keeps his faith and the right attitude, he is never the victim, but the victor; he is never conquered, but is the conqueror (James 1:2-8). The Christian should be "on top" of every situation (cf Rom. 8:31-39). God does not usually take away ordinary suffering in a Christian's life (unless in some special instance in answer to prayer). We are still in this physical body which is under the penalty of death. If God completely sheltered us from all suffering and trials the church would be weakened and the individual would not be strengthened. God uses suffering to help us spiritually.

Suffering makes us humble. Long periods of unbroken health and prosperity are not always the best for man. Man has a tendency to feel a little too secure and a little too self-sufficient, and consequently forgets God. He has a tendency to forget that he is mortal. He forgets that life is very frail and fragile, and that it is constantly lived on the brink of eternity. Misfortune and suffering make us humble. They make us realize that we are the sin-cursed creatures that we are. They make us realize that we are as the flower and soon fade away, that nothing in this world is permanent. 2 Chronicles 33:12 has this to say about King Manasseh of Judah as he was being taken into captivity: "And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers." In Psalm 39:4-6 we read, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. . . . Surely every man walketh in a vain shew. . . ." Our frailty and brevity of life should make us humble.

Suffering purifies and perfects. Within all of us there are imperfections. Suffering purifies us. Just as the gold is refined to a greater state of purity, suffering purifies the Christian. We are brought face to face with ourselves, our sins, and our God. Purification takes place as we repent (1 Pet. 1:7; 4:1-2). If we let Him, God will use our suffering for our eternal well-being. It helps us develop character! With the Psalmist we can cry, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes." (Ps. 119:71.)

Suffering makes us compassionate. One who has experienced suffering has a feeling for the suffering of others. He may have shown concern, and even sympathy, toward those fallen into adverse circumstances. But once he has suffered, his feelings turn into compassion. After we have suffered, we have a deeper feeling of compassion toward Jesus. As we think of the awful death he died on the cross we are made to love Him more.

Suffering makes us thankful. We have mostly had good health and lived in an affluent society. But once suffering comes, we are made to realize just how good God has been to us. We learn to appreciate the little things in life. We should take Jesus as our example as we face suffering. He prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39.) Being resigned to God's will, will let us get all the spiritual good that we can out of our suffering. We must remember that all things work together for good to them that love God. We should also remember the blessed promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5.)

News Brief

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

NORTH CAROLINA

Statesville. Northview church has announced the appointment of Walter Edwards as pulpit minister. Brother Edwards will be moving from Cookville, Tennessee. Kirk Sams will continue as youth minister and Stanley Crews will serve as a minister of involvement.

Wilmington. A special Thursday night Bible class will be conducted by F.W. Mattox. Tom Phillips recently resigned from the eldership.

Rockingham. Jim McCutchean of Richmond, Indiana, preached in a meeting November 11-15. There were two baptisms and one restoration, reported by Ricky Phillips.

Southport. The address of the church is 1251 Highway 87, Boiling Springs Lakes, Southport, NC 28416. Phone: 845-2296. It is our understanding that there is no longer a congregation meeting at S. Howe Street.

Statesville. Broad Street has appointed the following men to serve as elders: Tommy Smith, Richard Bell, and Steve Short. Brother Short also serves the congregation as preacher.

Charlotte. Archdale will host a "Youth Happening" February 21-23. Geoff Sikes is one of the scheduled speakers.

Charlotte. A Homecoming is scheduled for May 4, with Al Furline as the guest speaker. David Myers from Bardwell, Kentucky, will lead the singing.

NC Baptisms

Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 4; Linville Forest, Kernersville, 1; Gastonia, 1; Wilmington, 3; Broad St., Statesville, 1; Northview, Statesville, 2; Rockingham, 2; Westside, Charlotte 1. TOTAL: 15.

Charlotte, Westside

JERRY LAXSON, Reporting: The Westside church sent me on a preaching tour of military congregations in Europe in November. I was there for three weeks. I preached for seven congregations including the church in Stuttgart, Germany. I was a soldier stationed there in 1971 when I preached my first sermon. It was a thrill to preach from that same pulpit again.

I found conditions among the military churches to be generally good, in spite of the fact that most are very small in number.

I have entered subscriptions to **Carolina Christian** for several of the families I stayed with while on the trip. One of the things I kept hearing from the brethren there was the desire for good literature. I hope that more will subscribe to the magazine.

SC Baptisms

Fairview, Spartanburg, 3; Myrtle Beach 4; Summerville 2; Central, Spartanburg, 3; Winnsboro 1; S. Pinckney, Union, 5; Maxwell Ave., Greenwood, 1. TOTAL: 19.

Union, S. Pinckney

JOHN D. WHITE, Reporting: This last month was an especially good month for us here at our fairly new congregation, the S. Pinckney St. Church of Christ. There have been some five baptisms, four restorations and two families placing membership with us. God keeps on blessing us spiritually and numerically.

We have a Sunday morning radio program every Lord's Day which has given us much good feedback from the community.

In addition to our most recent responses, we have several Bible studies in progress at this time. Some of the people have already begun attending with us.

January 12, 1986, is going to be a special day for our congregation. This will be our first anniversary as a congregation. Our area brethren are invited. We know you will want to share in the fellowship meal after morning services and then you will be uplifted by our visiting speaker, Keith Tripp, from Laurens, S.C.

One year ago we began our efforts with 43 people (men, women and children). Since then we have grown to where we presently have 85 baptized people.

Also, we write two articles for the local newspapers each and every week. These articles have given us much good response from the community.

Please take this opportunity to come and be with us as we celebrate our first anniversary.

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Editorial Book Reviews

The Scientific Case for Creation, Bert Thompson; Apologetic Press, 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117; 47 pages, paper, $1.00.

What do you think of communist countries withholding facts from their people when the facts do not favor the political ideas of communism? It is despicable! Yet the courts of our own beloved country are banning the teaching of facts in the public schools simply because the facts favor creation over evolution. This ought not so to be. Facts ought to be taught whether they favor creation or whether they favor evolution. Or as this book puts it, to ban facts results in "poor science and poor education" and to teach facts results in "good education and good science." It is a sad day for freedom, and unbecoming to a free society, when the courts consistently rule that facts must not be taught in public education because they favor origin by creation (which they say is religious) rather than origin by pure chance (which foolishness they call science). If you want to be informed on the facts of creation that are being banned, you will find them in abundance in this brief treatment. Dr. Thompson has done an amazing job in presenting his case. It is brief but adequate, readable and absolutely convincing. So do yourself a favor. Learn the facts. Read this book.

The "Bible Translation" Controversy, Wayne Jackson; Apologetic Press; 22 pages, paper, $1.00.

We have a tendency to swing to extremes. And nowhere is this more evident than in the version issue. Nearly everything that has been written on modern versions by our brethren has either swung to the extreme of painting them as far superior to the older versions (ASV and KJV) or denouncing them all as useless, evil, and totally untrustworthy. Some churches have gone so far as to ban all translations in Bible class and the pulpit except the KJV and ASV (it would make as much sense to ban the use of all Greek lexicons published since Theyer's). Surely the truth must lie somewhere between these two extremes. And that balance is precisely the contribution this booklet makes to this study. While the author favors the KJV and ASV (as does this reviewer) he also recognizes their weaknesses and the value of other translations. He calls for a balanced view in the use of all of them — to reject the bad while making use of the good. That is, we should bring to bear upon the study of God's holy word every tool available to us, whether old or new. This booklet will afford you much food for thought and give you needed and balanced insight to the version controversy. It is the most sensible, sound, and suitable thing we have seen.

Happiness in the Home, Harold Hazelip; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506; 120 pages, paper, $3.95.

Perhaps no subject is more vital in the last half of the 20th century than the home, and this book admirably addresses itself to the needs in a highly readable and understandable manner. It is thus both timely and needed. The author, the newly selected president of David Lipscomb College, discusses, in 15 chapters, many different aspects of the home, including such topics as What Is a Family? How Does a Family Define Success? What Teenagers Need Most, Till Someone Else Do Us Part, What Really Matters in Building Your Marriage, and other vital subjects. Coming at a time when divorce is rampant and homes are falling apart, even in the church, this is an important book. If it is read and studied and the Biblical principles it sets forth are practiced thousands of homes could be saved and many others moved closer to homes as God would have them. Suitable for private or class study (and would serve well as the basis of a series of sermons), everyone, both young and old, can profit from it.

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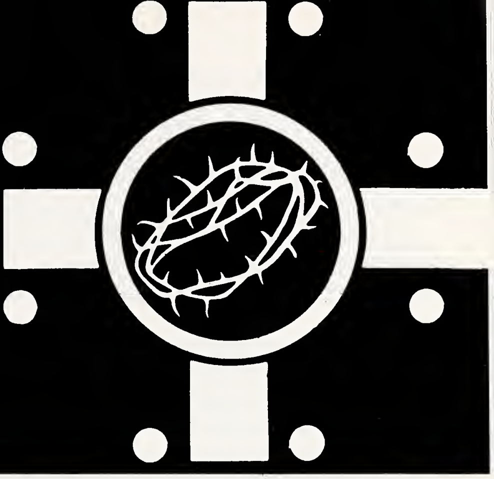

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Seven Words From the Cross

In studying the death of Jesus recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we are able to determine that there were seven statements uttered by Jesus during the six hours He was dying on the old rugged cross. The first is the word of forgiveness. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.) The second is the word of assurance and salvation. "Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43.) The third is the word of comfort and love. "Woman, behold thy son. . . . Behold thy mother." (John 19:26-27.) The fourth word spoken by Jesus from the cross is the word of anguish and desolation. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46.) The fifth word is the word of human desire and suffering. "I thirst." (John 19:28.) The sixth is the word of victory and triumph. "It is finished." (John 19:30.) The seventh is the word of satisfaction and committal. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46.) — From the editorial

Seven Words From the Cross

Johnny Melton*, Statesville, NC

"Last words are for fools who haven't said enough!" So said Karl Marx from his deathbed in March 1883 after his housekeeper offered to record his last words for posterity.

But are they really? Most of us are fascinated by last words. On the death of a well-known individual much attention is usually given to his last words. If a loved one is taken from us suddenly, we often contemplate over and over the last words that were spoken between us. How painful it is when those last words were mean or angry exchanges. On the other hand, how comforting it can be to reflect upon them when those words were characterized by love and affection.

Last words often reveal one's character. Voltaire, the French philosopher, spoke to his doctor from his deathbed: "I am abandoned by God and man. I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six months' life." The doctor replied, "Sir, you cannot live six weeks." Voltaire retorted, "Then I shall go to hell, and you will go with me."

Dying words also can reveal the real object of one's life. Phineas T. Barnum, the famous showman, died in his eighty-second year. His Big Show was playing at Madison Square Garden. His last words were a question concerning the amount of money his show had made that day.

The dying words of Jesus reveal His character and the real object of His life. They deserve to be studied carefully.

Warren Wiersbe has observed, "These statements are very important to us, not only because of the person who spoke them but also because of the place where they were said. When our Lord was doing His greatest work on earth, He was uttering some of His greatest words. These seven last words from the cross are windows that enable us to look into eternity and see the heart of God." **(Jesus' Seven Last Words,** Warren W. Wiersbe, p. 5.)

**Guest Editor*

In studying the death of Jesus recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we are able to determine that there were seven statements uttered by Jesus during the six hours He was dying on the old rugged cross. The first is the word of forgiveness. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.) The second is the word of assurance and salvation. "Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43.) The third is the word of comfort and love. "Woman, behold thy son. . . . Behold thy mother." (John 19:26-27.) The fourth word spoken by Jesus from the cross is the word of anguish and desolation. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46.) The fifth word is the word of human desire and suffering. "I thirst." (John 19:28.) The sixth is the word of victory and triumph. "It is finished." (John 19:30.) The seventh is the word of satisfaction and committal. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46.)

It is noteworthy that the first, the fourth, and the seventh words of Jesus from the cross were addressed to God. Jesus dies as He had lived. He prayed. Wiersbe noted, "When our Lord **entered into** His suffer-

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ing, when our Lord was **enduring** suffering, and when our Lord **emerged** from His suffering, He spoke to His Father in heaven." (Wiersbe, p. 6.)

Further, it is interesting to note that the first three statements demonstrate Jesus' concern for others. These were spoken between 9:00 a.m. and noon. But at noon darkness shrouded the earth as the presence of God was withdrawn. The final four statements of Jesus focused attention upon Himself as He was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) and purposefully poured out His blood to atone for the sins of the world (Heb. 9:11-14).

This special issue of **Carolina Christian** will focus on the dying words of Jesus. There are many faith-building lessons to be learned from a study of these seven words from the cross.

The contributors to this issue have been asked to approach each statement devotionally. That is, to present the positive truths that are revealed in each of our Lord's last words.

Too often our writing and preaching is polemic. We appear to be more determined to refute some false doctrine that has grown out of a misreading of a passage or to demonstrate what is not taught in the passage than we are to expound the positive truth that is taught.

This issue is sent forth with the prayer that contemplation of the suffering and death of Jesus on Calvary will inspire within Christians a greater faith in and appreciation for and devotion to our wonderful Savior. And should these articles be read by one who is yet unsaved, our aim has been to point him to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) and to convince him of the great price that heaven paid that he might go to heaven.

Father, Forgive!

Larry Eppley, Charlotte, NC

Hatred. Maliciousness. Envy. Bitterness. Insensitivity. Self-exaltation. To this list could be added all those base elements which are so common to humanity. Yet the distressing fact is that all these characteristics were fused together into the darkest of all transgressions: evil perpetrated in the name of righteousness.

He taught them love. He offered them hope. He healed their sick and raised the dead. He spoke of the Father and brought heaven within their reach. And what was that token of appreciation offered by those whose lives he had touched? Nothing less than the cross would do for this "false teacher," this "threat" to the Roman peace.

Even Pilate the Roman procurator could not talk them out of it: "I tell you, He's not guilty. Why won't you let me release him?" Yet even the feared representative of the imperial city could not withstand the weight of their corrupt intent. To avert a riot and to protect his own interests Pilate conceded. The death order was given.

"You would have no authority over me, unless it had been given unto you from above; for this reason he who delivered me up to you has the greater sin." (John 19:11.) Pilate would remember these words of the Galilean prisoner, the one whose innocence he had proclaimed just before ordering him to be crucified. This Jesus was unlike any man, Jew or Greek, bound or free, which Pilate had ever met. Pilate would remember that even in the face of death this Jewish prisoner had been conciliatory even to the Roman governor about to pass sentence.

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Forgiveness On Display

When Jesus looked down from the cross He could watch His chest rise and fall as His breathing became more labored. His eyes confirmed what His tortured nerve endings had already told Him; His lean and muscular body was no match for the scourge. Looking down beyond the lacerated torso, beyond the bent knees and impaled feet, He could observe some of the citizens as they mocked the pathetic movements of the crucified. Others sought to torment Him with morbid sarcasm. "Some Christ this is!" they screamed. "He can't even save Himself. How can He save others?"

"But Jesus was saying, Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34 NASB.) Some Christ indeed.

How are we to understand this request? Could God actually honor such a sentiment? Was it the case that these people were somehow forgiven? Or do we conclude that this prayer was ignored?

There was more to His prayer of forgiveness than these words. The presence of the "Word made flesh" implied heaven's desire to forgive. That God's only begotten would bring Himself within the range of a society of sinners is of itself a mystery, calling for explanation. From the beginning of His earthly walk throughout His personal ministry and finally in His dying moments, forgiveness was on display. The enemies of Jesus were short-sighted when they viewed the cross as their greatest achievement. In reality, it was God's greatest accomplishment. Not only did the cross and its victim speak of the heartlessness of humanity, but Jesus' prayer declared the will of God. Forgiveness is thus defined: the liberation of the sinner from ignorance and guilt.

Ignorance and Forgiveness

The gospel message first recorded in Acts 2 accomplishes two things. First, it informs the ignorant. "Let all the house of Israel know for certain," Peter cried, "that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified!" (Acts 2:36.) The record tells us that these words cut deeply into the hearts of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They were ignorant no longer. Peter later explained, "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also." (Acts 3:17.) Likewise Paul would later write, "And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in

Anne Watson

A sister in Christ, Anne Watson, was killed in an automobile accident January 17. The accident happened near Pinehurst, North Carolina, when another vehicle ran into the Watsons. Brother Watson was seriously injured and is now recovering at his home. Anne, born in Houston, Texas, received a masters degree in library science from the University of Texas. She loved teaching and had a special interest in helping church libraries reach their potential as a learning center.

Anne is survived by her husband, Dr. Paul Watson, minister at the Cole Mill Road church in Durham and four children: Mark, Susan, Elizabeth, and Margaret. She was a "fine Christian lady and companion." As a Christian mother, her example will serve her children and friends for many years.

A worship service was held at the Cole Mill Road church in Durham Monday afternoon. Dr. Robert Jones, an elder of the Cole Mill Road church, presented a beautiful lesson centered around a powerful life. Broken hearts, with faith in God's precious promises, sang some of sister Watson's favorite songs in praise of our loving Father. The song "Be With Us, Lord" was part of the Watsons' wedding ceremony and the Monday service was concluded with the same song. The service was a powerful affirmation and testimony of trusting faith by a lovely group of God's people.

unbelief." (1 Tim. 1:13.) Some have said that ignorance is no excuse. Yet the truth is that ignorance (inexcusable as it is) is in fact our only excuse. On behalf of the wicked, Jesus pleaded ignorance. Father forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

In addition to informing the ignorant of their sinfulness, the gospel raises up the cross as the banner of forgiveness. It declares, "Now you know you are guilty, and the cross is repulsive to you. But look again. Upon the cross is your forgiveness, freely given, and awaiting your acceptance." Peter was instructing the sinner to return to the cross when he told a convicted Pentecost crowd, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." (Acts 2:38.) And when Paul reflected upon his own conversion, he wrote, "All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death; . . . our old self was crucified with him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." (Rom. 6:3, 6.)

So it is, that we look upon the cross and behold our own sinfulness. Then we look again and are overwhelmed with a forgiveness even greater than the awesome burden of guilt.

Forgiveness Extended

With His own blood, Jesus signed our pardon. Forgiveness is extended. Yet as is the case with any pardon, it must be accepted. Suppose, however, that someone says, "I have no need of pardon. I do not accept the reality of sin. I have no reason to repent. I will accept no pardon." This is the greatest of all tragedies. Such an attitude looks upon the cross and beholds nothing. It turns a deaf ear to the dying plea of the Crucified Innocent. It spurns the greatest lover of humanity ever, and denies the One who was capable of forgiveness to a degree unparalled in human history.

It becomes clear, then, that forgiveness must be accepted to be effectual. But what is equally clear is that forgiveness must precede the acceptance. From the divine heart of spontaneous love issued forth the ultimate act of forgiveness. That act forever stands, never to be recalled. The crucified Savior cries, "I have forgiven you. Please accept My forgiveness, you who stand at My feet jeering and cheering. You who mimic My inability to keep My head from wobbling by wagging yours. You who cry for Me to come down without knowing that My desire to forgive is what keeps Me here, and that if I took flight from this cruel perch it would be for vengeance. And you, who stand quietly watching Me die, remembering that only hours ago you cried out for My blood to be upon you and your children. You who came out to see a spectacle but who will return to the unholy city beating your breasts. Or you, who were My disciples, but have denied Me or deserted Me. You who at this moment have lost any faith in My Kingship. And you who would have been in one of these classes, yet were out of town this day, yet have within your hearts the same sinful inclinations. Yes, you! All of you of this and all generations do I forgive, even as I pray, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' "

History seemed to repeat itself when, some years later, one of Jesus' representatives lay bleeding just outside Jerusalem, the victim of a mob stoning. "I see Jesus" he had cried, "standing at the right hand of God!" Surveying the faces of those thrilled by the prospect of his imminent death, he uttered, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The capable evangelist who would never preach again fell to his knees, and prayed, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:54-60.) Then Stephen died.

We can never know if Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of Christians, had watched Jesus die. Yet surely he had heard of Jesus' words of forgiveness. When Saul stood approving the death of Stephen, he was nonetheless transported to the cross. Although he was determined to continue his assault upon Jesus' disciples, he must have been a bit unnerved by the unexplainable power of the cross — the unquenchable desire to forgive!

A Challenge to Forgive

Shortly after becoming a Christian, Saul (Paul) reminisced, "Lord, . . . in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in Thee. And when the blood of Thy witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the cloaks of those who were slaying him." (Acts 22:19-20.) Should there be any doubt that Jesus' prayer of forgiveness extended to Paul, we need only read his words to the Romans: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Rom. 5:8, 10.)

One could also say that Stephen's prayer was answered, in that Paul was reconciled to his Lord. Yet would it not be more accurate to say that the determination to extend forgiveness emanated from the cross and filled the heart of Jesus' servant, to then radiate upon Paul and the others present at Stephen's execution?

The challenge is clear. We who are Christians are under the compelling power of the cross to be filled with the unquenchable desire to forgive. Should we shrink back from so noble a challenge, we need to behold the cross anew. We need to listen as the crucified Savior, covered with blood and mud, opens His soul and prays, "Father, forgive!"

". . . Today Shalt Thou Be With Me in Paradise"

Terry Gunnels, Columbia, SC

". . . Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43.) Have you ever stood by the side of a dying loved one and heard him say, "Don't worry, I'll see you in heaven"? It would not be uncharacteristic of any Christian to make such a statement when he understands that his reward for obedience to the gospel and a faithful Christian life is ultimately to be in the abode of the dead called paradise.

May I ask each reader to dismiss any theological argument about the difference between heaven and paradise, or whether the thief was baptized for the remission of sins, for it is not my purpose to deal with the eschatological aspect of this Scripture nor to argue the baptism of John but to help us grasp the meaning of being with the Lord after this life is over.

I had the privilege of knowing brother Gus Nichols for a short time before his death and I continue to appreciate all the stories told about him but the one told about his death thrills me every time I think about it.

Brother Gus had an insight into the Scriptures that is unsurpassed in modern times. His understanding of the Scriptures came alive in his sermons and also in his personal life. He believed so strongly that when Christians die, angels come and take their souls to paradise, that he instructed his family to leave one side of the bed vacant so the angels could come unhindered to take him there. My limited discernment of the unseen world disallows me to speak with accuracy about the work of angels but the theorem of the story is that brother Gus believed that being translated from one life to another was as real and something to be expected as any other aspect of our faith.

I recently heard brother Wendell Winkler exhort the audience at the close of a powerful sermon entitled, "What will it be like when Jesus comes?" He asked each person to seriously consider where he would spend eternity. You could feel the mood of the au-

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dience as each person allowed himself to look into his heart and see himself as he stood before the judgment bar of God. I was not surprised when the aisles began to fill with those who had come to grips with the reality of some day moving from the land of the living to the city of the dead and there to learn of the fate of their souls. No wonder I had to ask those on the front seats to stand aside so all of those who responded could be seated to discuss their needs with the elders. Though some of the respondents were teenagers, the majority of them were adults. They were not the ones who always respond but responsible members of the Lord's church. They came because they wanted to be sure where they would spend eternity.

It is highly possible (and some scholars think probable) that the "thief on the cross" had been in the number who had been baptized by John in the wilderness (Mark 1:4-5) but that is not the point of this article. There was a man dying the most horrible death known to man and taking advantage of being in the presence of the very Son of God. This man was a thief and knew he was guilty but that Jesus was innocent yet they shared the same condemnation (Luke 23:41). How he must have wondered why Jesus showed no bitterness at all, for he heard Jesus say, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). This had to have an effect on him. He was able to see in Jesus the perfect man, the Son of Jehovah God.

At first it seemed that both of the thieves joined the crowd in reviling Jesus. As the events of the day transpired, one of the thieves became strangely moved by the conduct of the mysterious person who was dying beside him. This led to a penitent plea for mercy. He could very well have heard Jesus speak of His kingdom while he was enjoying the fruits of his thievery and now, as death approached, he saw his need for salvation and how temporal and unimportant worldly possessions were.

Even today impending death opens the eyes of the spiritually blind to see the futility of sin and the true merit of the Savior.

The conclusion to the matter was that Jesus promised to take the robber with Him to a place of blessedness that very day.

Paradise is separated from **Tartarus** by a great gulf and we can rest assured those who make it there will never be lost. No one looks forward to the pains of death but all should look forward to paradise. This anticipation is not "pie in the sky by and by."

Many songs have been written about paradise but I doubt any of them can remotely approach the blessings that await us there. One that comes to mind is the chorus of a Stamps-Baxter song, "Paradise Valley."

"Up in the beautiful paradise valley,
By the side of the river of life,
Up in the valley, the wonderful valley,
We'll be free from all pain and all strife;
There we shall live in the rose-tinted garden,
'Neath the shade of the evergreen tree,
How I long for the paradise valley,
Where the beauty of heaven I'll see."

My belief in paradise was initiated very early in my life when my only brother was killed instantly in an accident. My mother eased the hurt in my heart by talking about how some day we would see him again in paradise. As I have grown older, and often need help with moments of insecurity, I recall those times when Mother would say, "Don't worry, Danny's with the angels now and some day we'll see him again."

How can we transpose the words of Jesus to the thief on the cross to our own circumstances? We can imagine that these words are synonymous with Jesus' words for us to **come** when at the judgment we have been placed on His right. To hear Him say, "Come," will be the sweetest and most wonderful word we will have ever heard. All the tribulations that would have assailed us, all the adversities that would have laid us low will fade into endless oblivion just to hear the Lord say, "Come."

Have you ever thought in the midnight watches that if you never knew what it was like to walk the streets of gold, to be encased in the jasper walls, to walk through the gates of pearl, and to meet your loved ones on those heavenly shores what you will miss?

What a day that will be "when the morning breaks eternal bright and fair and the saved on earth shall gather over on the other shore," and we'll be allowed to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the thief on the cross.

"Woman, Behold Thy Son!" "Behold Thy Mother!"

Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

"Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." (Luke 2:34-35.)

So spoke Simeon to a new mother whom all subsequent generations have called blessed (Luke 1:48). The wondering and wonderful virgin who believed the amazing news that though she had not known man, yet would she bear a son who would rule forever (Luke 1:33), to this dear young, poor woman came the news after her Son's birth of a sword for her soul.

How true it is that children — even the best of them — carry pain for their parents. Sometimes the children make the parents hurt. Sometimes the children are simply victims. However the pain may come, a parent can be certain the soul will be pierced.

The sign spoken against is obviously the cross — to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness (1 Cor. 1:23; Gal. 5:11). The connection Simeon makes is plainly a prophecy of John 19:25-27. And truly, what words can describe the pain this dear woman would feel some thirty-two years later? To behold your Son tortured, falsely accused and condemned, hated, and now crucified in the midst of ridicule, the most precious Son you have ever known or could experience, a Son who always did what was right and would hurt no one, a Son whom you did not always understand but who always understood you, how could you stand to watch Him hoisted by spikes through His flesh (but how could you turn away?), hanging on the blood-soaked and rugged wood, His breathing in spasms, sweat and blood and tears encrusting His eyes, His tender voice now hoarse, His tongue thick, His body wretchedly twisted in pain without relief — a body you once cradled so tenderly in your arms and that you had wrapped in swaddling clothes and had watched grow into strong manhood? You cannot wipe His face or ease His pain. You can give Him no relief. You can only watch Him die. But when He sees you, He thinks of you. He knows you will need dependable care. And in the fewest possible words He relays to His best friend that you are now under his care. Even like this He thinks of you.

How can it be that Jesus' words, "Woman, behold your son!" mean, "Momma, look what I have to suffer! Look what they've done to your Boy!"?

It was only too obvious what was going on. Jesus would have said nothing to intensify His mother's grief. Nothing would be accomplished by emphasizing Himself to her at this time. On the other hand, what light of love we see to understand Jesus as saying, "Madam, consider that man standing beside you, grieving with you, as your son from now on."

As Jesus was dying, He knew His mother would need care. And the beloved disciple was the man to do it. How Mary was blessed to have a Son like that! Even when the sword pierced, how blessed she was! Yet even this Son has said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:27-28).

Please, dear reader, consider the example Jesus leaves for us in this regard. Caring for one's parents and grandparents is a prime responsibility of Christianity (1 Tim. 5:4-8). What Jesus did at the cross is tantamount to leaving a will on behalf of His mother.

The Bayside church of Christ is in need of a full-time minister. The congregation is small and can offer only partial support. The congregation is free of any indebtedness. We do not want anyone with crossroads or anti-convictions.

If interested, please contact C.W. "Tex" Pettigrew, (919) 771-5711 or Ricky Wilkinson (919) 426-8293, or write the church.

What are you doing for your loved ones who ought to be able to depend on you for their care? How are you helping them now and how will they be helped later? Notice what John did: "And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home." (John 19:27.) There is no forgetting the mother here either by the dying or the living. There are no excuses made. She is taken care of in proper style.

What plans have you made for those dependent on you in case of your premature demise? Will they be adequately cared for? Are they adequately cared for now — not just with money but with your company? If you can see to such and do not, you have sinned (James 4:17; Eph. 6:1-3).

"At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light and the burden of my heart rolled away!" What a wonderful Lord we serve. Mary knew this. That is why she is found with the other disciples in the upper room after the Lord's resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:14). Though she was His mother, now she calls Him Lord and worships Him who lives forever and ever. She is supplied with another son plus all her own who now believe. All is well. The sword pierced but was not deadly.

Always, when we do God's will, always, when we willingly sacrifice to provide for others, always, our own needs are met. Parenting is hard and the sword pierces uncalled-for, undesired. But in Christ all will be well. Remember this, parent, as you rear your child. Remember this, child, as your turn comes to care for your parent.

The Forsaken Christ

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

An eerie darkness covered the land at a time when the sun was normally at its peak in the early afternoon sky. Everyone looking upon the horrible scene of that day must have been filled with a deep sense of foreboding when they heard a loud cry that was at once piercing and haunting: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Of the recorded sayings of Jesus on the cross, this is by far the most disturbing and the most profound.

What prompted such a seemingly desperate cry? Was it the cry of His human nature as it was so overwhelmed by the pain and humiliation of that experience? Or was it that He simply felt so alone in the presence of His enemies? Or did He just think He was forsaken, when in reality God had gone nowhere? None of these suppositions will suffice and all fail to comprehend the infinite significance of the cry. Jesus cried out because He was indeed forsaken. God had turned away. For that brief moment in history fellowship between the Father and the Son was disrupted, and for that reason it was the blackest moment in history. What pain the Father must have felt. Simeon had said that a sword would someday pierce the heart of Mary, but what of the sword that must have pierced the heart of God? And what of the despair that engulfed our precious Lord? We look on in wonder and ask, "Why?" What was back of such a desperate cry? We may not like the answer, for it forces us to see ourselves as we really are.

To answer, Jesus was abandoned as the penalty for sin. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." (2 Cor. 5:21.) As our sin-offering Christ bore the sins of all humanity and the holy God could not but look away, for sin separates (Isa. 59:1-2). Thus, by His cry we are convicted of the terribleness of our sin. Our sin, my sin, was so costly that pardon from it was obtained at the expense of the Son of God being forsaken. Men are tempted to indict God for His seeming cruelty in forsaking His Son, but it was for holiness and justice that Christ was forsaken, not cruelty. It is man who stands indicted, for had there been no sin, neither would the Son have been forsaken.

While the cry of Jesus is at first haunting and disturbing to us, there is in it yet an element of comfort. The cry in a paradoxical way speaks of the greatness of God's love for the sinner. God listened from a distance to the lonely voice of the Son because He recognized our need for a Savior. God understood that unless Jesus was forsaken for that moment in history, man would be forsaken in eternity. It was for love that Jesus was forsaken, and in that love we may find our eternal comfort.

As Jesus hung suspended on the cross that fateful afternoon, His soul was immersed in a loneliness that you and I will never comprehend.

"Yea once Immanuel's orphan cry His universe hath shaken —
It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken.' "
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning, **Cowper's Grave).**

He was totally alone, forsaken, because of our sin and because of love divine. May His cry ever ring in our ears and remind us of the terribleness of sin and the immeasurable depth of divine love.

I Thirst

Rick Parks, Lexington, SC

"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' "

For our sakes the Son of God experienced unparalleled agony and physical suffering. Jesus was crucified at 9:00 a.m. and spent the first three hours on the cross in unbearable heat before the darkness came. It is doubtful that any of us, living in a world of luxury and convenience, could appreciate the kind of thirst our Lord experienced.

Above all, the most important thing about this fifth statement from the cross is the emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. Things seem to have reversed considerably since the first century. In the early church there was more debate about the humanity of Jesus than about His deity. Some insisted that He appeared to be human, but never was really a man. John's first epistle unequivocally reaffirms the humanity of Jesus. We can readily see the need to defend the deity of Jesus today, in a religious world where there are those who deny it, but why this emphasis on His humanity?

It is important for us to understand that Jesus' purpose in coming to the earth was not singular. We tend to rush Him to Calvary and neglect the intent of the gospels. Certainly, the Holy Spirit did not intend for these accounts to be biographies, since fewer than forty days of Jesus' life are revealed in the combined records. The gospels reveal the mind, manner and message of God's holy Son. Christ came to the earth to reveal in fleshly form the nature of the eternal God, so that we could be "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). If His earthly life had not occurred in fleshly form, we would be without a High Priest who could be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15).

The truth of Jesus' humanity is hardly insignificant. He was born as a baby, cried when hungry or thirsty, grew up like other children, was educated in the synagogue, learned the carpentry trade by His father's side, grew weary in labor, slept, hurt, loved, faced temptations and knew the harsh realities and experiences of humanity. The fact that He knew pain and thirst on the cross is indeed important to His followers — He understands our every hurt (physical and

The Cherokee church of Christ is looking for a preacher with a supporting congregation, or a congregation that is interested in supporting this work. This work is primarily with the Cherokee Indians. A three-bedroom house is provided. The church is located in the Smoky Mountains in Cherokee, North Carolina. This is a summer tourist area, and several members of the Lord's church visit the church here each week during the summer. Please contact: Cherokee church of Christ, P.O. Box 1202, Cherokee, NC 28719. Phone (704) 497-9576.

emotional). Enduring these experiences of humanity while remaining "holy, harmless, undefiled" (Heb. 7:26) qualifies Him to be our High Priest, a glorious blessing that we too often take for granted.

The power of Christ's cross has nothing to do with the gruesome events that preceded it, nor the brutality of the crucifixion itself. Yet, the intensity of His agonies is not omitted from the gospel texts. Knowledge of the physical and emotional cruelty suffered by our Lord helps us more fully appreciate the depth of His love for us.

Jesus was offered the same narcotic (wine mingled with myrrh) that was given the two criminals crucified on either side of Him. This opiate served to deaden pain, but it also dulled the senses. Jesus was determined to remain fully alert and retain control of His mental faculties. The importance of this is evident in our text. After six hours of racking pain, continuous insults from a howling mob and the heartache of witnessing the grief of His mother and other loved ones, Jesus' mind is still clear and His memory unimpaired. His attention is focused on Scripture. By submitting to the Father's will, the Son of man is fulfilling Messianic prophecy, "knowing that all things were now accomplished." If the words "I thirst" are removed from their context, a conclusion that is altogether wrong might easily be reached. One might see these words as a pitiful plea for mercy, for the alleviation of His pain. In context, however, it is one of the most heartwarming statements of our Lord. Though His lips are parched and the heat has drained fluids from His body, Jesus is drinking from a cup. "The cup which my Father has given Me, shall I not drink from it?" (John 18:11.) Our hearts should fill with deep gratitude and our eyes with tears of joy as we realize that, while someone mercifully put vinegar on a sponge and lifted it to His lips, the Savior was more greatly concerned with the cup He was partaking of on our behalf.

The man on the cross at Golgotha, thirsty, bleeding, writhing in pain, quenches the thirst of all those who seek Him. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." (John 7:37.) Jesus Christ endured thirst at Calvary so that we might never thirst again. No one will know what it means to be thirsty in heaven (Rev. 7:16). No one will have their thirst quenched in hell. May those thirsty souls who reflect on these words allow God's blessed Son to satisfy their thirst eternally.

It Is Finished

Johnny Melton, Statesville, NC

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." (John 19:30.) "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost." (Matt. 27:50.)

The sixth word from the cross is this: "It is finished." This was not a bitter, mournful wail. Rather, it was a shout. Matthew says Jesus cried with a **loud voice.** Our Lord was not desperately seeking to hang on to His physical life, only to realize that death was at hand, and so reluctantly and bitterly admitted that death had conquered. No, His cry was not "I am finished"; instead He shouted, "It is finished!" It was not the cry of defeat — it was the shout of victory.

The English phrase "It is finished" is the translation of one Greek word, **tetelestai.** It means, "It is finished, it stands finished, and it always will be finished."

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In ordinary, everyday Greek, **tetelestai** was often used. It was the word a slave would bring to his master upon the completion of a task. The slave would acknowledge that he had finished the work his master had given him to do. When Jesus came to this sin-cursed earth, He did not come as a sovereign — but as a servant. He ". . . made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. . . ." (Phil. 2:7.) He said to His disciples, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (John 4:34.) He prayed, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." (Luke 22:42.) And in His great High Priestly prayer, Jesus affirmed, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4.)

This word was also used in the marketplace. The presentation of a receipt upon the satisfaction of a debt is not just a modern custom. Receipts have been found in archeological digs that date back to the time of Christ and beyond. When we make the final payment on a note at the bank, we like to see it marked, **paid in full.** The ancient Greek would write across a receipt, **tetelestai.** Paid in full. Finished. The debt has been satisfied.

On the cross, Jesus satisfied God's holy demands for justice. He paid man's sin debt.

Young people sometimes sing:

"He paid a debt He did not owe,
I owed a debt I could not pay.
I needed someone to wash my sins away;
And now I sing a brand-new song, amazing grace.
Christ Jesus paid the debt that I could never pay."

The book of Hebrews explains, ". . . once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was offered to bear the sins of many. . . . It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. . . . But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb. 9:26-28; 10:4, 12.) Indeed, the work of making salvation possible is completed. The sin debt has been paid. It is finished.

"Lifted up was He to die,
'It is finished,' was His cry;
Now in heaven exalted high:
Hallelujah, what a Savior!"
— P.P. Bliss

What remains is for the sinner to claim the benefits of this great salvation. It is available by grace, through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). Faith accepts what grace offers. By faith the sinner must repent (Luke 13:3). By faith, the sinner is to submit to baptism in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38). And thus, by faith the salvation which Jesus accomplished on the cross when He cried, "It is finished!" can be received.

The Final Word

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." (Luke 23:46.)

There was the boldness of absolute confidence in Jesus' last words from the cross. The words of the dying ungodly might be a whimper, or even a rage. The failing voice of the righteous in death would likely be but a feeble whisper. But the boldness of Jesus finds strength to give a victory shout, "Into thy hands. . . ."

Jesus died the same way that He had lived. This is remarkably and beautifully implied in His dying declaration.

He lived and died with Scripture in His speech. Always Jesus had shown not only a familiarity with, but also a dependence upon the written word of God. His last words are from Psalm 31:5. We have known of those who died with cursing and blasphemy in their speech. This may not have been intentional, but the habit of such language prevailed. Others with rational fear of what is ahead begin to speak of holy things, but their speech does not seem natural because they have rarely spoken of such things before. No one familiar, though, with the daily conversation of Jesus would be surprised to hear Him quoting Scripture.

He lived and died with a prayer on His heart. To the psalm He added the prayerful address, "Father." But prayer was not merely His last resort. He had always prayed, and always with confidence. "I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always." (John 11:41-42.)

Jesus lived and died with His entire being devoted to the Father. He had lived with His earth life committed to the Father. This indicates obedience, but it also shows trust. Thus He yielded His spirit to the Father's care with the same trust in which He had daily lived (cf. 2 Tim. 1:12).

Jesus lived and died as a willing Saviour. In John 10:17-18 it is emphasized that His death would be voluntary. The words "He gave up the ghost" imply a voluntary surrender. Similar words are used in our English translation regarding Ananias and Sapphira, but there are differences in the Greek. Whether a definite conclusion can be made from this difference or not, there is an obvious difference in what occurred. As with others their spirits left them because they had no power to retain it (cf. Eccl. 8:8). But Jesus released His spirit by His own decision, a decision of loving compliance to the redemption plan.

Jesus lived and died knowing there is more to man than his earthly physical existence. Modern materialists, like the Sadducees, deny the immortality of the inner man. Jesus answered their arguments (Matt. 22:23-32). A recurring theme was the supreme value of the soul (Matt. 10:28; Mark 10:35-37). Even as the vital functions of the body failed, Jesus knew the spirit would continue to live.

Jesus lived and died as an example for all to follow. Frequent emphasis is given to following His example in daily living. He also shows us how to die. There have been leaders of men whose life and character others have sought to emulate. Worldly people may want to dress, talk, and live like their heroes — politicians, stars, teachers, etc. But when the world's great men go through the throes of death how unlikely that their admiring followers would say, "When I must die I want to die like that." But in Jesus we learn how to die. We learn to face death as a release from suffering. We learn to accept death as a transition. We learn to anticipate death as a **transaction carried out in partnership with the heavenly Father** (cf. Ps. 23:4). In the death of Stephen we find one who learned from the Lord how to die (Acts 7:59-60).

Help Needed in Reidsville

John David Allen, Reidsville, NC

Sunnycrest church of Christ in Reidsville, North Carolina, was started with six members in November 1983. Attendance now averages approximately 20 for this lone congregation in a county of 83,000. Sunday assemblies are presently held at the Reidsville YMCA. We are very thankful for the use of these facilities. Nevertheless, there are not sufficient classrooms and many interested folks are reluctant to attend there. There appears to be a subconscious but strongly rooted attitude in Reidsville, "if it were a real church it would be meeting in a church building."

Since our goal is to reach as many as possible for Christ, we are planning to erect a church building. After considering all feasible options, the church acquired a lot in an excellent location. Plans are in progress to build a small, modest structure, planned for expansion as the congregation grows.

By using Christian volunteers who have building skills, we expect to erect this building for approximately $50,000. Not only do we need volunteers, we also need $50,000. This seems like a huge amount for our tiny congregation. However, it can be accomplished by just 5,000 Christians contributing $10 once. It would only take 2,000 Christians contributing $25 each. We have faith that many individual Christians will wish to respond. Over $1,500 has been given or pledged thus far. Donations or inquiries for additional information may be addressed to 308 Maple Avenue, Reidsville, NC 27320. A representative of the congregation is willing to travel and speak to interested congregations about this.

There are still 22 counties without a church of Christ in North Carolina. What if each congregation begun in one of these counties were to try this? It seems like a fine precedent. This would be an excellent way for all congregations to find out about new church plantings and for interested Christians to make affordable, but much-needed contributions to new works for the Lord. Of course, some individual Christians will be unable or unwilling to make even such small contributions. But many mature Christians are interested in seeing the Lord's church spread to other areas of North Carolina even though they can't go themselves. This is a way that nearly everyone can help.

Thoughts to Ponder

The Indwelling Christ

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

Introduction. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3:14-19.) This was Paul's prayer in behalf of the Ephesian Christians. We may be inspired by the memory of Christ to think, speak, and do better, and we may, in a measure, succeed and get a great deal of pleasure from our resolution and endeavor, but we will never reach the center of Christian joy and hope and strength until Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. The life that pleases God is not that which observes outward forms only, but that which is characterized by purity and Christlike holiness in the inward man. In every age this spiritual life has been in danger of extinction through the pressure of material influences. It is always the tendency of ordinary men to turn from the more refined and subtle beauty of the spiritual life and seek refuge in the tangible, the visible, the material, too often adopting, as the outward form, the product of some false extraneous idolatry, borrowed from a world that could no longer retain God in its thoughts.

The Indwelling. See Rev. 3:20; John 14:23; Gal. 2:20; and 2 Cor. 13:5. The word "dwell" means "to live, to make one's abode or home, in contrast with a temporary or uncertain visit." This indwelling is to be regarded as a plain and literal fact, and not simply an influence derived but separable from Him. A dead Socrates may so influence his followers, but that is not the way the living Christ influences His disciples. The same verb is found in Colossians 1:19; 2:9; and

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from a comparison of those passages, one may easily learn its meaning. It is the Father's will, therefore, that Christ should make His abode within us, never again to be compelled to knock at our heart's door or have His claim disputed. How can Christ dwell in a Christian's heart? By faith (Rom. 10:17; Gal. 4:19) until a mind and a life in complete harmony with the mind and life of Christ shall have been formed within a person. We all know certain people in our homes change the atmosphere there — our speech and action. Christ will make wonderful changes. He will affect one's social dealings and conversation. He will shape one's business transactions, shutting out the bad and bringing in the good, and will provide new standards and measurements. It is not necessary to seek for these, for they will come in the path of duty.

In the Heart. Not in the emotional nature alone, but He is to live in and rule our thoughts, feelings, and will. This will give us a clear conscience and bring peace beyond understanding. This indwelling is not like a man abiding in a house, but not identified with it. Christ takes possession of our being and transforms it into His own likeness.

Through Faith. The prominence of faith in the Scriptures (Heb. 11:6; John 3:18; 8:24; Acts 16:31). What one believes gives rise to his conduct and conduct results in character (Prov. 23:7). It has been truthfully said, "An act oft repeated hardens into habit; and a habit long continued petrifies into character." The relation of faith and conduct is not only true in the matter of becoming Christians, but also of our subsequent life as such (see 2 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:8). Faith will bring Christ into one's heart, but it also requires faith to keep Him there. He dwells in the heart by faith. What is faith? We believe in Him, trust Him, rely on Him, have confidence in His word of promise, cleave to Him, obey Him. That is faith, and by it He dwells in our hearts.

What Do We Gain by This Indwelling? Constancy. "Oh, that I were always what I am sometimes." (See Heb. 13:8; 1 Cor. 15:58.) **A greater vision or a better understanding** — "strong to apprehend" (Eph. 3:18; Acts 10:34 where the same word perceive is used). Peter's experience had enabled him to see the truth that he announced in verses 34 and 35. Christianity has been defined as the reproduction of the life of Christ in the human heart. Is our perspective broad enough to enable us to reproduce the life of Christ on the tables of our hearts? The story is told of a young man who was studying to be an artist, a painter. He studied for years under an old teacher, and then set up a studio of his own. He had dreamed dreams, as all artists do, that some day he would paint a masterpiece, and after working several years in his own study he said: "The time has come when I must paint my picture." And so, when canvas had been stretched, palette and paint ready, he began the outlines of what he hoped would be a masterpiece. One day he was out of the studio, leaving brush and paint and picture just begun. While he was gone the old teacher who had known his heart and mind and aspirations all through the years came in, studied that outline for a little while, and then dipping the brush into the fresh paint, in big rough letters, entirely across the face of the picture he wrote a-m-p-l-i-u-s, amplius, the Latin word that means "wider." Laying down his brush he went his way. Soon the young artist came in and at once saw the picture with the rough letters across its face and said: "Who dared spoil my picture like that?" Then he looked carefully and said, "Oh, the master has been here, the teacher; it must have been he." Then he spelled out those letters, a-m-p-l-i-u-s, wider. What did it mean? Can he mean that my picture is too narrow and too cramped in this perspective, that I need a wider view? He must have meant that, and so the young artist painted over that outline as artists know how to do, and began his picture anew, with a wider view, and he did paint one of the world's masterpieces. **A knowledge of His love** and the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19).

Have thine own way, Lord! Have
thine own way!
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!
Fill with thy Spirit till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me!

We Are All Painters. We are painting not on canvas that will some day crumble back to dust like that artist was painting on, but painting on the enduring canvas of the human soul, our own soul's picture of Jesus Christ, the most beautiful picture of which the human heart can conceive, and I wonder if our Teacher, who is Jesus Christ Himself, as He looks upon our work would not in many instances say: "Amplius," wider! Our conceptions of Jesus and what it means to be a Christian are so narrow, so short, so low, so shallow, so cramped, not filled with all the fullness and blessings of God. And that is why Jesus wants to come into our hearts and dwell there.

Climb Every Mountain!

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

Excel still more! That was the apostle Paul's message to a congregation he cited as an example to all (1 Thess. 1:7) and spoke proudly of wherever he went (2 Thess. 1:4). A congregation on the right track if ever there was one!

But Paul did not tell the Thessalonians to take a vacation from their Christianity or even stop and smell the roses for a while. No, Paul's message to saints who were already walking in the light and loving one another was **excel still more** (1 Thess. 4:1, 10)!

And here's a lesson for us. It is not enough to be on the right track — we have to keep moving! Complacency is a killer disease among Christians. Our call is onward and upward (Phil. 3:13-14) and complacency will rob us of both the power and perspective needed to make our heavenly climb. Upon reaching the summit of one mountain our next move should be to look for the next mountain to climb as opposed to basking in the sunshine of our success. Remember, it is but one short step from the pinnacle of success to the valley of defeat and complacency will put us there in no time.

"Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13.)

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Letters to the Editor

Howard:

You have a good commentary on Romans. But it seems to me that "from faith to faith" in Romans 1:17 means from the system of faith (the Bible) to a personal faith. — Bruce Curd, Quincy, FL.

Our view as is expressed in the commentary is that the expression means from the beginning of faith to the end of faith. That is, from faith's inception to its fruition. But it is a difficult expression and brother Curd's view should be considered. But in our judgment it does not do justice to the whole verse. Paul said, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written. The just shall live by faith." Where is the righteousness of God revealed? In the gospel (that is the objective faith). Thus the objective faith (the gospel) reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith. Our view says that in the expression from faith to faith the word is used both times in its subjective sense. The objective faith (the gospel) reveals the righteousness of God as it relates to subjective faith from its beginning to its end. If brother Curd's view is correct (and we admit its possibility) then Paul is saying that the objective faith reveals the righteousness of God from objective faith to subjective faith. If our view is correct then he is saying that the objective faith reveals the righteousness of God from the beginning of subjective faith to its end — its fruition.

Dear Howard:

I have been reading with interest the letters responding to my earlier letter and your answer. Please do not misunderstand: I have no objections to anyone (whether in the church or in a denomination) working to stop abortion. What I wanted to know is "Are there any organized groups of Christians working against abortion?" I am aware of and appreciate the job done by groups like Right to Life. Without them the subject of abortion would slowly fade from the public conscience, but they are as Linda Deveoux said, "People of every religion and some with no religion at all." Perhaps the letter from David R. Clinard has the best suggestion, that is to educate the women having abortions to their alternatives, as AGAPE of NC is doing. You are certainly right in saying that the opposition to the methods by which abortions are prevented appears to be wrong. — Jim Thompson, High Point, NC.

In all the response we received on this matter, no one even hinted at an organized group in the church working to oppose abortion.

Dear brethren:

Please send me brother Winters' **Commentary on Romans.** I enjoy receiving **Carolina Christian.** It is a wonderful publication. — Charles R. Boston, Fairview, WV.

We do not argue with this appraisal!

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Though we no longer live in North Carolina, we continue to enjoy receiving **Carolina Christian.** It is the state of our birth (both physically and spiritually) and we still have deep interest in the Lord's kingdom there. Brother Winters' articles are especially interesting and thought-provoking and we always look forward to them. — Jim and Gloria Hardy, Groveport, Ohio.

The editor performed the wedding ceremony for the Hardys many years ago. It gives us great joy to hear of their many years of happiness and useful service in the Lord's church.

Dear brother Howard:

Wayne Jackson sent me a copy of the December (1985) **Carolina Christian** which contained a review of my father's book, **Short Talks Around the Lord's Table** by

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Michael R. Mobley. Thanks so much for including this review. I studied the other articles and am impressed with the content and sincerity for the truth they displayed. Payment for one year's subscription is enclosed. — Virginia W. Thompson, San Mateo, CA.

It is our pleasure (and aim) to support the good works of good men everywhere, as space permits. Now and then someone thrills us with an expression of gratitude, as sister Thompson has done.

Dear Brother Winters:

I want to thank you so much for the love and care you have for the Lord's work in Zambia and the Carolinas and for supplying us with copies of **Carolina Christian** each month. And thanks so much for the reply to my question about the one cup brethren. They are causing division in the church here by taking it over. It is a shame, after all the time and money spent by brethren in the States to have the church established in Zambia. You see, many Zambian Christians do not see the difference between them and the first missionaries who came. And besides, they are raising money power, and we know that money is the root of all power. Please pray that someone may come and teach the truth now, before it is too late. — Douglas Birttell Sibazia, Zambia, Africa.

It is a sad day in the Israel of God when missionaries go causing division rather than preaching and practicing the unity for which the Lord prayed.

News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte. Two special youth activities are planned for spring. February 21-23 are the dates for a Youth Happening at the Archdale congregation. The Youth Gathering at Providence Road will be March 21-23.

Fayetteville. Because of being transferred to Arkansas, brother Harold Osborne has resigned from the eldership at Helen Street.

Hendersonville. The church has sent another $1,000 for Ethiopian relief, bringing the total sent to $5,000.

West Jefferson. A shipment of clothing has been sent to Africa. The congregation has an active clothing program.

Forest City. A new work is beginning at Forest City, according to an item in the Northeast bulletin, Taylors, SC, which is assisting.

Hickory. The West Hickory congregation has announced the appointment of David Ferneyhough, formerly of Georgetown, SC, as pulpit minister. David is a graduate of East Tennessee School of Preaching and brings many years of experience and service to the Hickory area. "We are thankful for him and his wife, Cindy, and look forward to a long and prosperous work. Continue to pray for us as we labor for His kingdom in this area."

Kernersville

MICHAEL D. STONE, REPORTING: The 1986 North Carolina Lectureship is scheduled for September 2-5 at the Linville Forest church of Christ. The theme this year is "A Spotlight on the Family."

Brewer Road, Winston-Salem

ARTHUR SPRINGER, REPORTING: The Brewer Road church in Winston-Salem is excited to announce the sponsorship of Don and Nancy Files as para-missionaries to Belgium. The elders and congregation have accepted the responsibilities of partial financial support, coordination of financial support from other sources, maintaining an effective working relationship between our congregation and the Files, continually reviewing their needs and progress and assisting in their spiritual development.

Present plans are for the Files to leave for Belgium on or about May 1, 1986. They plan to spend at least two years in Belgium assisting two missionaries already in Brussels. From there, they plan to move to Switzerland, France, or Poland, depending on the situation.

At this time, we are seeking additional financial support and opportunities for Don or a member of our Missions Committee to talk to interested groups of people about the work in Belgium and their efforts to spread the gospel.

If you can be of assistance, please write Mission Committee, Brewer Road church of Christ, 2010 Brewer Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27107, or call (919) 784-0663.

NC Baptisms

Providence Road, Charlotte, 4; Broad Street, Statesville, 1; Hendersonville, 1; Brooks Avenue, Raleigh, 2; Linville Forest, Kernersville, 3; Hickory, 1; Archdale, Charlotte, 1; Northview, Statesville, 1. Total: 14.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Rock Hill. Melvin Williams and the Crawford Road church have a fifteen-minute radio program on Sunday mornings, 7:30 on WTYC.

Myrtle Beach. A thirty-minute radio program is now on WCSE at 9:00 on Sunday mornings.

Orangeburg. The bulletin has announced that the congregation is now fully self-supported. J.C. Townsend continues to serve the congregation.

Taylors. The Northeast church has a radio spot message four times daily over WTLT, 103.9 FM.

Duncan. Brother Otis Burch has resigned from the Duncan eldership.

Spartanburg. Central members have provided $874 to buy Bibles for China.

SC Baptisms

Lexington, 2; Myrtle Beach, 1; Orangeburg, 4; Central, Spartanburg, 2; Summerville, 2; Fairview, Spartanburg, 1; Crawford Road, Rock Hill, 1; South Pinckney Street, Union, 1. Total: 14.

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The Carolina Lectures

Albemarle, N.C.

April 7-10

See Pages 14 & 15.

Mark 16:16 and Baptism

A tremendous amount of energy has been expanded by religious proponents to try to make New Testament baptism an acccessory to rather than an essential part of salvation from past or alien sins. This is certainly strange because the Bible is very clear, plain, and simple on the subject. In fact, few subjects in the Bible are so clearly stated in so many different verses and in so many different ways. Take for example the words of Jesus when He gave the Great Commission to His apostles: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Is it posible that there is anyone of reasonable intellegence who cannot understand this? If so, how?

It is our judgment that if anything other than salvation was involved, no one could possibly misunderstand the words of Jesus. Just look at the verse as it stands. Salvation is conditioned upon two commands, belief and baptism. The two conditions (commands) are tied together with a coordinate conjunction, making them of equal value and force in reaching the desired goal (to be saved). One cannot be taken without the other. And since this is the case, salvation is not promised to the one who believes only. Neither is it promised to the one who is baptized without believing. It is promised to the one who believes **and** is baptized. Is there any other way to understand the words of our Lord? There is not.

But to make this even more forceful and pointed, let us change the promise so that it reads: "He that believeth and is baptized shall receive a $1000." If this statement was made in good faith (and surely all will agree that Christ made His statement in good faith) and by one who has the power to give the $1000 (and there can be no question but that Christ has the power to save), is there a reasonable man in all the world who would argue that he is promised the $1000 before and without meeting both conditions? Surely not. Is one promised the $1000 when he believes only? Absolutely not. Is he that is baptized (without faith) promised the $1000? Not by any process of reasoning known to man. Then to whom is it promised? Only to him who believes **and** is baptized. Does anyone with a smattering of reason misunderstand that? Not on your life.

But why do people see the conditions as essential when money is involved and argue with angry vehemence that only one condition (faith) is essential when salvation is the reward? We do not have all the answers but we feel confident that most will fall into one of three catagories:

1. The devil has their eyes blinded so they cannot see — that is, they are under the power of strong delusion (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9-12).
2. They have personally closed their hearts and minds to the truth of the gospel and will not see — that is, they are self-deceived.

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3. They are not willing to submit to Jesus as Lord and thus refuse to see — that is, they willingly reject it.

Is there any other conclusion we can reach when a passage is as clear, plain, and simple as Mark 16:16 and people spend so much time trying to change it, to distort it, to make it say what it does not say? Either they must be blinded by delusion, misled by deception, or wilfully refuse to accept the words of our blessed Lord. Neither alternative is commendable.

We long ago concluded that the best thing to do (the only right thing to do) is to believe the Lord's words, do what He says, and trust Him to keep His promise. We believed and were baptized. If the Lord kept His word, He saved us. If He did not keep His word, then He is not the Lord of glory. But we believe that He is the Lord of glory. We therefore believe that He saved us when we obeyed His word. This is the confidence of our faith.

Lukewarmness

Each of the seven letters to the seven churches in Asia has a great deal to offer us in terms of its success and/or failures. But the Laodicean church should be a strong warning especially against self-sufficiency and indifference. Let us take a look at the aspect of indifference, for this seems to be the problem with which most of the churches of Christ in the 20th century are faced. The Lord said to this church: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:15-16.) To see the Lord's teaching here, we need to understand the three concepts individually.

1. Hot — boiling hot. This means that the church would be fervent for, active in, and enthusastic about the Lord's will. That is, it would be on fire for truth and right.

2. Cold — the exact opposite of hot. It signifies a total indifference, an apostasy from the faith. It would describe a church no longer pretending to be the Lord's people — that is, a church no longer pretending to be of Christ while living for the devil.

3. Lukewarm — tepid, neither hot nor cold. The word signifies a condition in the church of a divided interest, halfheartedness, drifting along without convictions, zeal, or enthuasiasm, and thus characterized by apathy and indifference. It is a condition of faith too shallow for substance (James 2:14-26), confession without commitment (Matt. 6:33), acknowledgment of Christ without self denial (Matt. 16:24), belonging to Christ without following Him, having the name Christian without the character of a Christian, outward acts without obedience from the heart (Rom. 6:16-18).

Lukewarmness is a condition the Lord cannot endure. He said that because the Laodicean church was neither cold not hot but lukewarm, He would spew it out of His mouth. That is, the church's indifference was sickening to Him. The Lord wills for His church to be either hot (fervently burning with zeal for Him) or cold (not falsely pretending to be His while following the devil). Obviously it was His will that it be hot, but if it was not going to be what it claimed to be then He would rather that it be cold. While this may be hard for us to comprehend, during His personal ministry here on earth there was no sin that He more severely rebuked than that of hypocracy (e.g. Matt. 15:1-9; 23:13-33). He would rather that a church (or an individual member of it) show its true nature, even if depraved, wretched, and apostate, than to pretend to be what it is not.

An indifferent church is not what it claims to be. This reminds us of a story we read somewhere. A preacher was at a public gathering when a young man came along selling what he said was hot chicken sandwiches. The preacher purchased one, but upon ex-

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amination found it to be a cold fish sandwich. He called the salesman and said, "Young man, this sandwich is neither **hot** nor **chicken.** How do you explain that?" He replied, "It's not supposed to be. Hot Chicken Sandwich is just what it is called." Just so, how do we explain a church that is made up of members so unconcerned. So indifferent, that they care nothing about the Lord and His will? Are they churches of Christ? Or is that just what they are called?

Totally Uncommitted

We hear a lot these days about total commitment, and of course that is a concept of eternal grandeur if by it one means total commitment to Christ and not to some man or system devised by man. Jesus Himself, if we have not missed His teaching absolutely, made total commitment to Him the condition of true discipleship (cf. Matt. 6:33; 16:24-26). But have we considered what total commitment to Christ means as it relates to our lives? To be totally committed to Christ is to be totally uncommitted (cut loose from, having no affinity with) to Satan and all that he stands for. This is simply to say that we must make a choice as to whom we will serve (cf. Joshua 24:15; Rom. 6:16), as to whom we will commit our lives. To follow Christ is to abandon evil; to follow evil is to abandon Christ. Thus as Christians we should be totally uncommitted to anything and everything that smacks of this wicked world.

1. We should be totally uncommitted to any theory (such as the theory of evolution) or practice (such as being overly tied up with material things) that removes God from creation or denies Him His rightful place as the ruler and sustainer of the universe. When man denies God and His work he makes himself and the craft of his own hands his god. The real question here is whether man is the creature or the creator. If he is the creator he is the master of His own fate, he is the ruler of his own life. There is not God over him, he is accountable to no power higher than man, he is here by chance, having nothing to look forward to but that which he can achieve with his own limited powers. On the other hand, if he is the creature (and he is), then God is his maker and ruler, and the Creator/creature relationship must be sustained in every aspect of life. This means that man is for God and not God for man. We should therefore be totally committed to God and totally uncommitted to all that is opposed to Him.

2. We should be totally uncommitted to all falsehood, deception, dishonesty, and every other work of the flesh. Again there is a sharp dichotomy drawn between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:19-23). They both offer a way of life, a philosophy that permeates all that one is, does, or says. If one follows the philosphy of the flesh it will result in every evil thing. But if he follows the teaching of the Spirit, as it is revealed in the divine word of God, it will result in a life of purity and holiness. The dichotomy between the two is of such nature as to mandate a complete separation — a total commitment to the latter means total uncommitment to the former.

We must recognize this fact: total commitment to Christ means total uncommitment to Satan and his cause. We must choose whom we will serve . . . and we cannot mix the two.

Contributors

Each contributor of $25 or more (to help us publish 1 Corinthians and ultimately to get the paper on a self-sustaining basis) will be listed in the paper and will receive a free autographed copy of **Commentary on First Corinthians** as soon as it comes from the press. We hope many of you will want to join this number.

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Here's The Answer

To Questions You've Asked

Howard Winters

The following questions come from Bob Berard of Austin, TX: "I have read your editorial (March, 1985) in **Carolina Christian** and it brought to mind a question I have recently wrestled with and I would like to get your further comment. . . . In your article you note that the restoration leaders 'were willing to surrender their liberties if and when the practice of their liberties got in the way of peace.' My question is, would it not be wrong to forfeit liberties God has given which will allow brethren to further the work of the church? For example, would it not be wrong to stop cooperative evangelistic efforts among churches, even though many brethren object to that type of cooperation? I know you later mention 'personal liberties' but that brings to mind the case of Titus in Gal. 2. Paul was not willing to give up his liberty. Is there any way to distinguish between personal liberties and the liberty afforded a church?"

This is such a large question that it would be impossible for us to do it justice in a short article. In fact, it could not be adequately dealt with if we took the whole issue. A whole book, perhaps several, should be written on it. But we will (as usual) offer a few observations. And we shall do so by briefly answering the questions (numbered for convenience) and then make some observations which hopefully will throw more light on the subject than will characterize the short answers.

1. Would it not be wrong to forfeit liberties God has given which will allow brethren to further the work of the church? In some cases, yes. But the answer largely depends upon the nature and necessity of the liberties. There are times when the answer would certainly be no. We should always view the situation from another angle, namely, would (or could) a liberty forced to the division of the church further the work or would it hinder it? How many divisions do we know that have advanced the cause of Christ? No doubt some, but as a rule division hinders rather than helps. The solution lies in neither side forcing its liberties on the other. If it is a liberty it is not an essential (see 2 below) and if it is not essential no one has the right to say, "You cannot do that," and no one has a right to say, "You must do that." The problem here is that some refuse to allow the liberties which God allows.

2. Would it not be wrong to stop cooperative evangelistic efforts among churches even though many brethren object to this type of cooperation? On the whole, yes. But this comes at the question from the wrong angle. If it is a true liberty no one has a right to object to it, and certainly not to divide over it. He might not feel that it is right (expedient) for him but he should not bind that opinion on other brethren. If there are those who cannot with good conscience accept the cooperate efforts as a legitimate liberty (that is, a true expediency, see 3 below) why not let them do their own work using another method? Why divide over a liberty? Why not use every method available? Where does the Bible teach that one must line up with a method (especially if he feels that it is inexpedient) or else be considered unfaithful and unsound? While it is granted that this still leaves us with some problems, as we see it the problem is not the problems but the lack of brotherly love, concern, and understanding.

3. Is there any way to distinguish between personal liberties and the liberties afforded a church? Yes, but the same basic principles will govern both (see 1 below). Let us use our differences as an example. All differences start with the individual. And there are plenty of these in every church. Every successful congregation succeeds, not by a forced uniformity, but by learning either to work with or to work around the vast number of differences which characterize its members. For example, in most churches

there are those who believe it is right for a Christian to serve his government in time of war and there are those who believe that it is wrong; there are those who believe that remarried divorcees must separate before they can be pleasing to God and there are those who do not believe it; there are those who believe in a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit and there are those who do not; there are those who believe that it is wrong to use instrumental music in worship and those who do not believe that it is wrong (according to one report at least 40% of the members of the church see nothing wrong with it). On and on we could go. This is not to say that the things mentioned are matters of liberty (we consider most if not all matters of faith). But it is to say that individuals within every successful congregation learn to live, work, and worship together in spite of their differences (even in what most of us call essentials). Could not churches do the same? Why is division necessary (when both stand for the fundamentals), especially when only matters of liberty are involved?

In order to expand on what has already been said we make the following vital observations:

1. The editorial referred to has reference to personal liberties (problems as they occur on the individual level) and did not have in view the larger question raised here. However, most of the principles that apply to individuals will also apply to churches, though perhaps not all. It is just as sinful for churches to divide over matters of liberty (whether it be judgment, opinion, or expediency) as it is for individuals. If the individuals who differ can work together in a congregation, could churches that differ not work together in essential matters? Why create a faction over differences in matters of liberty? On the matter of cooperative efforts to preach the gospel, since it is a matter of expediency, why not permit some churches to work cooperatively while others work independently? Both would be working in their own way to preach the gospel to the whole world. Preaching is the essential thing. How it is done (when the means are legitimate) is a liberty. But the strange thing is that we rarely if ever divide because of the essential; we divide over the liberty. (Incidentally, Paul refused to circumcise Titus because to have done so in that situation would have compromised a great principle of truth. The liberty could not be surrendered under the circumstance without also surrendering the principle. That he could not do . . . nor can we. Thus we cannot surrender an effort when it would compromise an essential. Thus no cooperative work [assuming that the cooperative work is a liberty] could be surrendered if it meant preaching the gospel in a less effective way or to fewer people. But on the other hand to fail to surrender an effort that violated the conscience of good brethren when another acceptable method would be equally as effective would also be wrong.)

2. We have not yet learned to distinguish matters essential from matters of liberty. The essential is that which the Lord has revealed in His word, whether explicitly or implicitly (although we must be very careful with the implicit to be sure that it is implied by God and not just our own conclusions). The matters of liberty that we are concerned with here (elsewhere it might include other things, such as Paul dealt with in Romans 14) are in the sphere of expediency (aids in carrying out an essential), judgment (conclusions drawn from evidence that are not absolutely conclusive, at least not for all), or legitimate opinion (no one has a right to hold an opinion that conflicts with the word of God). To help us see the difference in their nature, here is an example of each: (1) An essential — preaching the gospel. This the Lord has commanded (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47). (2) A judgment — the spirits of the righteous dead go to **hades**, where they wait in conscious pleasure and in a joyful relationship with the Lord until the resurrection. The evidence for this seems conclusive to us, but it has not been to all sincere Bible students. (3) An opinion — the cup on the Lord's table represents

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the New Testament. To our mind there is no Scriptural evidence whatsoever to substantiate this. Yet some believe it. There can be no question about essentials. They are precisely what the Lord said. A judgment may or may not be true, depending on whether one has correctly or incorrectly handled the evidence. An opinion may be true or false but the evidence is far from conclusive in the matter. Usually our problems stem from the fact that we become so sure of the correctness of our opinions and judgments that we bind them as essentials. One ought to be free to work through a legitimate cooperative program or to be at liberty to do the work some other way if he thinks it best.

3. Nearly all division in the church results from the abuse of liberties, and one of the foremost is the matter of expediency. An expediency is a legitimate but not always necessary aid (method) in carrying out an essential. Our problem stems from the fact that we become so sold on certain expediencies (such as cooperative efforts to preach the gospel) that we try to bind them with the same force as a command. Thus when one rejects an expediency he has, in our mind, rejected the command and is therefore not worthy of fellowship. He is branded, cut off, and another faction is born. We thus cut brethren off, not because of a rejection of an essential but because he refuses (either cantankerously or for conscience's sake — it makes no difference with us) an expediency. Expediencies are necessary and they are authorized in the essential, but when there are many ways to expedite a command it is silly, sinful, and divisive to bind one on all. Factions should never be the result of differences over matters of expediency.

4. It is not wrong if brethren cannot work together to separate and do the work independently. This is a fact that we have either long overlooked or else refused to accept. Paul and Barnabas had such a sharp difference of opinion over Mark "that they departed asunder one from the other." See Acts 15:36-41. Two things should be observed about this incident: (1) They both went on preaching Christ to the world. Their difference in opinion stopped neither from doing the essential work. (2) They did not brand each other or break fellowship over the matter. That is, they went their separate ways but they did not divide the body of Christ. Thus we conclude that if there is such a difference of opinion (in matters of liberty) that brethren cannot work together in a single congregation, then let them follow the example of Paul and Barnabas and work in separate congregations. But let them both do the essential by whatever legitimate means each thinks best.

Just because brethren are meeting in two (or more) congregations and holding strong differences of opinion over matters of liberty does not mean that they are divided. If they are both teaching and practicing the fundamentals (those things necessary to salvation and the Christian system), they have the same aim, purpose, and goal. If both have obeyed the gospel they are in the family of God, hence brethren. As long as neither tries to interfere in the work of the other, by disfellowshiping it or trying to destroy it over matters of liberty, they can remain united, just as Paul and Barnabas remained united. Although they might hold opinions that would prevent them working together, they are both carrying out the essentials. Neither must compromise on that.

Now our question is concerned with a situation where many congregations choose to preach the gospel (carry out the essential) by means of a cooperative radio and television program (e.g., the Herald of Truth) while others choose to do so by supporting directly an evangelist in the mission field (and they do so because they have a strong opinion that the cooperative program violates some Scriptural principles and that the direct method is bound in the Scriptures). Are they divided? Not as long as both are agreed on the fundamentals or until one or both begin to press their views (opinions) to the point of making them a test of fellowship. The matter of how one chooses to carry out the command to preach the gospel is a matter of expediency (however, we must be aware of the fact that all methods we may call expediencies may not be lawful; a true expedient can never violate or replace a Scriptural principle). We may have a brotherly separation over matters of expediency but we must never divide the body of Christ over them.

The problem which brother Berard faces

comes about in the following way: The one supporting the preaching of the gospel directly concludes (and I firmly believe erroneously so) that his method is bound in the Scripture. Thus he makes it an essential — he confuses the method with the command or else he concludes that the method is as much a command as the command itself. He thus concludes that the cooperative method is unscriptural and he cannot therefore have fellowship either with it or with those who support it. The problem here is not so much with the direct method as with the disposition to bind it on all others (and yet he has no choice because he believes that the method is an essential) and to brand those who use the cooperative method as apostates. But if both methods are legitimate expediencies (and I believe they are), no one has the divine right to insist that all must follow either the one or the other. So until we can all be convinced that both are expediencies, or that the direct method is an essential, we see no solution but to work in separate congregations. But if both are practicing the essentials to the best of their ability we see no reason why this should result in a division in the body. We will simply be going our separate ways preaching the soul-saving message of Christ.

Statements on Bible Version

Bill Griffin, Spartanburg, SC

Over the past few months several Carolina congregations of the Lord's Church have published in their bulletins statements such as the following: "The elders request that only the King James and the American Standard versions be used in public worship and Bible classes." These two fine translations are excellent and certainly an attack on them is not the purpose of this short article. The major purpose here is to bring questions to the churches of Christ who publish such statements.

Are these congregations suggesting that these two versons are the only **true** translations in the English language of the Scriptures? Are they suggesting that **true** Christians would not use any other translations?

The author uses the KJV in his preaching most of the time. He is aware however, that what the brotherhood believe to be the original translation is in fact the fourth revision of the King James Bible. The beloved KJV is the version that changes passover to "Easter" and thus includes a pagan holiday

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in the New Testament. The KJV is the version that has our God "repent" which we know is impossible because He cannot sin. The KJV is filled with language that few people use and many do not understand. The reading level of the KJV is on the college freshman level. How many times have you heard the preacher or teacher explain why Corinthians 13 is the love chapter without the word love used in the King James Version?

The ASV is seldom used except by preachers and a few elders. It is a difficult version to purchase since only Thomas Nelson and Star Bible publishes it. It is an excellent translation and true to the original text. There are places that are difficult to understand in the Old Testament because of syntax and translation. It is a fact that most members do not own or desire to own the American Standard Version.

There are many poor translations of the Scriptures. There are also a number of good to excellent translations widely used in the brotherhood. A few of the widely used and accepted translations include: Revised Standard; New American Standard; New King James; New International; and most recently the Word Version published and translated by the brothers.

Are the congregations blackballing these translations in the Carolinas because liberal groups in the brotherhood may be associated with one or more? If you are then you must also remove the King James and American Standard Versions. Did you know that the baptists, methodist, and every other group uses these version?

Brothers and sisters, we are not King James Christians! Our people do need teaching on the various versions. It is encouraging to see the **Gospel Advocate** using both the KJV and NIV in much of the Bible class material it publishes today. The NIV is a readable version that can be understood.

Perhaps rather than statements in church bulletins, the body needs teaching on good and bad versions. What makes a translation good? Bad? A class, a Sunday evening lesson from the preacher or some other means could be used to teach the church.

We are to teach the truth that sets men free. We can do this with love even in some poor translations. Would these congregations rather see a torn and used New King James Version or a just like new twenty-year-old unread King James Version on the member's coffee table? Think and pray about these matters.

Sound Reasoning Is the Only Defense Against Error

Paul J. Ditoro, Washington, NC

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) With these words we are admonished to handle God's truth correctly. Peter said it is possible to handle the Scriptures incorrectly to our own destruction (2 Pet. 3:15-16). The apostle said that those who would wrest the Scriptures were "unstable" and "unlearned," or unsteadfast and ignorant of the teachings of God. Many have decided to depart from the word, and many have chosen to be educated, but not of God. Many who use the Scriptures (the testimony given us so that we might have faith), use them incorrectly. The incorrect use of Scripture does not produce saving faith, but damning error (James 5:19-20). Is there some method of study which may be used to ensure that our handling of the testimony is healthful instead of damning? Yes! It is called logic. When the rules of logic are correctly applied to the Scriptures, the conclusions reached will be sound. The Scriptures can be read and believed without the formal lining up of premises and conclusions; however when differences between brethren arise over certain teachings of the Scriptures, to decry the use of logic would be foolhardy. Some of our brethren have the ability to listen to what we say and to then immediately line up our statements in a syllogism. They have the capacity to read the Scriptures and to apply the rules of logic with ease. They have learned to think that way, and we are indeed fortunate to have such to aid us in our study of God's word.

The body of Christ would be spared much distress if those who have been schooled in logic would take the time to apply it to their positions. It is claimed that Jesus died for the church, but that he did not die over the issue of the mechanical instrument being used in the worship of the church. It is further claimed that the "doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9) actually refers to the doctrine **about** Christ, the intent being to show that all who believe in what the Bible has to say about the diety of Christ have God, and therefore since the issue of worship has nothing to do with what is taught about the diety of Christ, the instrument issue should not be a test of our fellowship with those of the Conservation Christian Church.

The Bible teaches that the household of God is build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). Was the church built upon what the Bible had to say **about** the apostles and New Testament prophets, or was it built upon what the apostles and prophets said. If one were to claim that the church was build upon what the Bible says **about** these inspired men, then the men are exaulted instead of Christ. But it is clear that the church is build upon what these men **said,** and not the men themselves. The men gave clear teaching as to the kind of music which the church should offer to God in worship (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12, etc.). Since the church was purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28), whatever God told these men to instruct concerning the church of necessity involves the blood of Christ. Jesus died for His bride, and His bride is the church which was build upon the apostle's doctrine. The congregation assembled on Pentecost may not have known all of the apostle's doctrine; but they did continue in that which they knew (Acts 2:42). We know more than they knew, therefore we have more in which to continue than they did (Luke 12:48). Lest one think that he can negate the teachings of the apostles and say "only the teachings Christ should rule" we must understand that what the Apostles and prophets of the New Testament wrote came from the risen Christ through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-15). It is clear then, that the doctrine of the apostles is in reality the doctrine of Christ. The application of logic may be of some help.

1. All teachings of the apostles and prophets are teachings upon which the church for which Jesus shed His blood is build (Eph. 2:20).
2. Vocal music is a teaching of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
3. Therefore, vocal music is a teaching upon which the church for which Jesus shed His blood is build. *(Modus ponens.)*

1. The church which was purchased by the blood of Christ is that church which practices the teachings of the apostles and prophets.
2. The church which practices the use of mechanical instruments of music is not that church which practices the teachings of the apostles and prophets.
3. Therefore, the church which practices the use of mechanical instruments of music is not the church which was purchased by the blood of Christ. *(Modus tolens.)*

1. The church of the Living God is that church which upholds all truth (1 Tim. 3:15).
2. The church which uses mechanical instruments is not that church which upholds all truth.
3. Therefore, the church which uses mechanical instruments is not the church of the Living God. *(Modus tolens.)*

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1. Those for whom Jesus died are those who are in that body which upholds all the elements of truth. (Eph. 5:25).

2. Those who use a mechanical instrument in worship are not those who are in that body which upholds all the elements of truth.

3. Therefore, those who use a mechanical instrument in worship are not those for whom Jesus died. *(Modus tolens.)*

Brethren, to say that Jesus did not die over the instrument is to miss the point. Jesus died for those who would submit to the truth which upholds His blood-bought body! Those truths are the teachings of the apostles and prophets. The teachings of the apostles and prophets are no more limited to the teachings **about** them than are the teachings of Christ limited to the teachings about Christ; but **what** they taught is that which guides the church. The church that will not be guided by what they taught is not that for which Jesus died. It was not necessary for us to line up all of these premises to make the point. We already knew these things by our study of the Scriptures. But there are those that trouble us. The place in which I serve as a minister of the gospel has nine churches which are called "Church of Christ." Only one of them is a vocal music congregation. A member of one of the instrumental churches told one of our members, "Isn't it great, we're all getting together." Due to the work of leaders in the Conservation Christian Church and of some who are suppossed to be among us, the cause of Christ is being undermined. They have **no intention of giving up the instrument.** And I have no intention of extending to them an olive branch. They have not submitted to the rule of Christ. When I baptize two people here and they run to the **Instrumental Church of Christ** before I am able to teach them all of God's truth, their error will destroy their souls.

1. Those who err from the truth are those whose souls are in danger of death (James 5:19-20).

2. Those who use the instrument are those who err from the truth.

3. Therefore, those who use the instrument are those whose souls are in danger of death. *(Modus tolens.)*

1. All those who have Jesus as Lord are those who do the things which Jesus says (Luke 6:46).

2. Those who use the mechanical instrument are not those who do the things which Jesus says.

3. Therefore, those who use the mechanical instrument are not those who have Jesus as Lord. *(Modus tolens.)*

Paul said to, "withdraw . . . from every brother that walketh . . . not after the tradition received of us." (2 Thess. 3:6.)

1. Those whom we are to fellowship with are those who walk after the tradition received of the apostles.

2. Those who use the mechanical instrument are not those who walk after the tradition received of the apostles (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

3. Therefore, those who use the mechanical instrument are not those with whom we are to fellowship. *(Modus tolens.)*

To fellowship them is to leave them in the fire. To allow them to indoctrinate our brethren with their teachings is to subvert the faith. To convert them from the error of their way is to love them and save them.

Sound reasoning is the only defense against error.

The Christian and Self-Denial

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." (Luke 9:23.)

1. What self-denial is. Self-denial means more than saying "no" to self — it also involves saying "yes" to Jesus. It has a negative and a positive aspect. It is dying to self and living for Jesus. It is recognizing our status as servants and Jesus' status as Lord.

In Biblical terms, self-denial is spoken of as losing our lives for Jesus' sake (Matt. 16:24-25). It is the "giving up" of all our possessions to Him (Luke 14:33). Probably the most vivid description of self-denial is its equation with cross-bearing (Luke 9:23). In Jesus' time, crosses were not pretty designs for ornamental jewelry. They were instruments of death. Thus, self-denial is defined as the daily dying to self and living for Christ (Gal. 2:20).

2. What self-denial is not. Self-denial does not mean that when we are tired we cannot rest (thereby "denying self"), nor does it mean that we cannot enjoy life anymore. In fact, Christians can and do find enjoyment in doing many of the things that Jesus wants us to do. But self-denial does mean that even in those areas where we have not yet learned to enjoy serving in, we will obey Jesus nonetheless because He is our Lord (Luke 6:46).

If we are not practicing self-denial (to some degree) in our lives, we are kidding ourselves about our Christianity. We are practicing a religion that might well be socially acceptable but it's Scripturally unacceptable. If we are not willing to practing self-denial we cannot be Jesus's disciple (Luke 14:26-27). We are not allowed to play God. There is one faith, one baptism and one Lord!

3. Self-denial from a positive perspective. All too often self-denial is spoken of (and consequently thought of) in negative terms. Yet in reality self-denial is "not negative repression but the cost of positive achievement."

Serious athletes recognize this and "give up" junk food and partying in exchange for grueling hours of physical toil. Musicians do the same thing. In fact, so does anyone who has dedicated himself to pursuing one thing in life above all else. In all of this, people give up the lower in pursuit of the higher. Yet the focus is not (or should not be) upon what is being "given up," it is upon what is being gained!

So it is with the Christian. Christ asks us to give up the lower to receive the higher. He asks us to lose our life that we might find it (Matt. 16:25). As Jim Eliot said, "He is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." As Paul said, "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." (Phil. 3:8.)

4. Self-denial as a response of faith in Jesus. The last word on self-denial should be the first word as well: Jesus. All too often the requirements of discipleship are stressed to the degree that the disciple's Lord is lost sight of. When this occurs, we are no longer following Christ, just a creed.

Jesus came that you and I might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). Furthermore, He gave His life that He might be able to give us life. (That is grace! He gave that He might give!) To receive that life Jesus calls us out of our pigpens of self and into His service. True, there is a call for self-denial but there is a cause for that call. He asks us to give up our petty treasures that we might find Him in whom all treasures are found (Col. 2:2-3).

In the end, self-denial is nothing more and nothing less than a response of faith in Jesus. We are willing to give our life to Him because we believe He gave His life for that purpose (2 Cor. 5:15). We are willing to deny ourselves because Jesus said through self-death comes life (Matt. 16:25). We are willing to crown Him Lord because we believe in His love for us (1 John 3:16).

"So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed Him." (Luke 5:11.)

Thoughts to Ponder

Shamgar

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

The checkered history of Israel is set forth in the Book of Judges. Following the death of Joshua and his contemporaries, the people, because of their sins, were subjugated by nations about them; but when they repented and cried to God, He raised up a judge who delivered them. It is thought that

Shamgar was the third of those judges and an humble ox-driver; but whatever his station in life, his sole weapon was an ox-goad, and God used him to lead the people to their freedom. Shamgar lived in a distressful period of Israel's history (Judges 5:6-8; 1 Sam. 13:19-22). They had forsaken God. They were afraid to walk the highways. Their crops and weapons had been destroyed or taken. The morale of the nation had been broken. They had lost confidence in themselves and in God. The need for a righteous leader was indeed great.

Shamgar the man. His name occurs only twice in the Bible, and there is not much said about him. But like many others who have served a righteous cause, it was not necessary that a great deal be explained about him in order for him to serve the Lord. From the brief record which is given, one would conclude that his station in life was humble and lowly, and perhaps he was only an ox-driver.

Why did God choose him? Because he possessed qualities which made it possible for God to use him for this service. He possessed the quality of a noble spirit of discontent. There was no littleness in Shamgar's discontent. He saw the condition that his people were in and he was filled with a desire to improve them. It is bad enough to be in a deplorable condition, but worse to be satisfied to remain therein! A story is told of an eagle that was hatched with a family of chickens. His fellow chicks laughed at this awkward, brownish bird. He looked funny to them as he tried to pick up the little grains of feed in the barnyard with his hooked beak. He seemed out of place. And, good to say, he felt strangely misfit. He did not know what he was made for, but he was sure it was not a barnyard. One morning, a tiny speck appeared in the sky. There was a strange wild call. This ridiculous "chick," looked up as if he understood the wild cry. The call came again, and then a fire began to glow in his eyes. With that he spread his great wings, and was off to the freedom of the mountains. He was made for such heights, and he could never be content to scratch among the filth of the barnyard. (See the story of the Prodigal Son — Luke 15:11-20.) Shamgar was a man of faith. He could see the weaknesss of the people but he could also see the forces which make for conquest. It does not take much faith to say, "I believe that God uses man in His service," but it requires a great faith to say, "I know that God wants me to serve Him." Shamgar dared to begin. When the enemy came he ventured to fight, in spite of the littleness of his weapon. He could have refused and made the excuse that he was greatly outnumbered and that his opponents were well armed. That, however, would not have been a valid reason. He did not use it!

What was the outcome of Shamgar's efforts? He won the fight, as all men do who put themselves on the Lord's side. He slew 600 Philistines with his ox-goad alone because he knew that God was with him. Another man of God was David. David dared to go up against Goliath, a giant of a man, who was more than nine feet tall, with only a sling shot. David knew he would slay Goliath because he knew that God would be with him. He killed Goliath with one shot of the sling (1 Sam. 17). The lad with the loaves and fishes could not feed the multitude, but he could bring his fishes and bread to Jesus. Shamgar used what he had and did his best, the result was up to the Lord. Not only did he win deliverance for himself, but for his people as well. He was blessed and became a blessing to others. **What does the Lord mean to you and me?** If we will do what we can now, if we do the best that we are able, we may expect greater opportunities in the future (Matt. 13:12). The Lord will bless everyone who does his part. The Bible is full of facts about men and women who elected to serve God and thus became a blessing to others and were blessed themselves (e.g. Moses, David, Samuel, Ruth, Esther, Peter, John, Paul, Stephen, etc.).

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Carolina Lectures

Albemarle, NC — April 7-10

Monday
April 7, 1986

1:00 p.m. — "The Challenge to Have a Constant, Diligent and Efficient Study of God's Word"
2:00 p.m. — "The Challenge to Understand the True Mission of the Church"
3:00 p.m. — (To the Ladies): "The Challenges of Christian Women in the Work of the Church"
3:00 p.m. — "The Challenge of Faithfully Preaching the Word"
4:00 p.m. — Jim Edwards: "The Challenge of Efficient Leadership in the Church (I)"
5:00-7:00 p.m. — Supper
7:00 p.m. — Singing: (Led by:________)
7:45 p.m. — Bobby Duncan: "The Challengers of Righteous Living"

Tuesday
April 8, 1986

8:30 a.m. — "The Challenge to Seek Biblical Unity"
9:30 a.m. — "The Challenge of a Christian Coping With Fears and Anxiety"
10:30 a.m. — "The Challenge to Know and Observe the Bounds of Christian Fellowship"
11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. — Lunch Break
1:00 p.m. — "The Challenge to Know What Is Liberalism and Ultra-Conservatism and Where We Should Be"
2:00 p.m. — "The Challenge to Reject the False Doctrines on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage"
3:00 p.m. — (To the Ladies): "The Challenges of a Christian Mother and Wife"
3:00 p.m. — "The Challenge of Godly Elders and Deacons"
4:00 p.m. — Open Forum
5:00-7:00 p.m. — Supper
7:00 p.m. — Singing: (Led by:________)
7:45 p.m. — Bobby Duncan: "The Challenges of Christian Teenagers or Young Christians"

Wednesday
April 9, 1986

8:30 a.m. — "The Challenge to Believe the Bible Is the Inspired Word of God"
9:30 a.m. — "The Challenge God Gives to Identify the Enemies of Christianity"
10:30 a.m. — "The Challenge to **Trust** in the Savior"

11:30-1:00 p.m. — Lunch Break

1:00 p.m. — "The Challenge of Word Studies"

2:00 p.m. — "The Christian's Challenge (Opportunity) in North and South Carolina"

3:00 p.m. — (To the Ladies) "The Challenge of Using God's Word for Daily Living"

3:00 p.m. — "The Challenge of Understanding the Meaning, Nature and Consequences of Sin"

4:00 p.m. — Jim Edwards: "The Challenge of Efficient Leadership in the Church (II)"

5:00-7:00 p.m. — Supper

7:45 p.m. — Bobby Duncan: "The Challenges of a Christian Home and Godly Parents"

Thursday
April 10, 1986

8:30 a.m. — "The Challenge to keep Our Eyes (Minds) Upon Christ and Follow Him"

9:30 a.m. — "The Challenge to Reject All Efforts to Inject Mechanical Instruments of Music Into the Worship"

10:30 a.m. — "The Challenge to Practice New Testament Discipline"

11:30-1:00 p.m. — Lunch Break

1:00 p.m. — "The Challenge to Reject All Teachings of Evolution"

2:00 p.m. — "The Challenge to Be Patient With God"

3:00 p.m. — (To the Ladies) "The Challenges of Being a Christian Neighbor"

3:00 p.m. — "The Challenge to Be Prepared for Judgment and Eternity"

4:00 p.m. — Open Forum

5:00-7:00 p.m. — Supper

7:00 p.m. — Singing (Led by:________)

7:45 p.m. — Bobby Duncan: "The Challenge to Have Constant Growth in the Local Congregation"

God's Awesome Power

John D. White, Union, SC

Nations are constantly reassessing their powerful armaments. This they do in order to protect their citizens. The question must be asked, "How much can any one nation depend on weapons of war for their security?"

The time is July 16, 1945 and in a split second the atmosphere is interrupted with the equivalent of 20,000 tons of conventional explosives. This was the test detonation of the world's first atom bomb. A short three weeks later the **Enla Gay** (B-29 bomber) dropped such an awesome bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. A short time later the city lay in total ruin along with 100,000 people who had been killed or wounded.

Obviously, this allowed destructive forces, never known before, to now become a part of the arsenals of the world's major powers. President Truman had said of that early atom bomb, "It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power." That first atom bomb now becomes only a flickering light compared to our bombs of today, which are measured in megatons of explosiveness. One megaton could be compared to a 300-mile-long train-load of conventional explosives.

What we have discussed so far sounds awesome indeed. But, listen to an explanation of God's power.

1. Our sun is actually a giant thermonuclear reactor. Scientists estimate that nearly four million tons of hydrogen are transformed into energy every second on our sun. It took only a 30th of an ounce to destroy Hiroshima.

2. Our sun is only a tiny one compared to the millions of other such stars in the galaxies. Some of them are more than 1000 times the size of our sun.

What does God's word say concerning His great and matchless power?

1. There is no one who can compare to our Creator (Isa. 44:6; 48:12).

2. His awesome creation declares His marvelous creative ability.

3. His matchless power and Godhead (invisible) are realized by His creation, all of nature (c.f. Rom. 1:20).

4. His greatest creation is mankind for whom He has sacrificed His only Begotten Son (Ps. 8:3-6; John 3:16).

5. His greatest achievement (power) for those obedient to Him is yet to come. This is to say, we (faithful Christians) will be resurrected to reign with our heavenly Father forever and ever.

In conclusion, why would man's punny powers be needed if mankind would only heed our Master's teaching? Consider the power available for all Christians. Listen!

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of **His Mighty Power,** which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead." (Eph. 1:19-20.)

Do you want to contact the greatest power in the universe? Then let us help you to contact our God, for He alone has such power as we have need of.

Divorce Is Sin

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

" 'Take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence,' says the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 2:15-16.)

Please ponder only one point: does God hate anything that is not sin? That the above title would be a debatable proposition to some brethren is truly hard to fathom, yet some would deny the truth of the statement.

Consider what Jesus says to the question, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" (Matt. 19:3.) He answers, "So then (because of creation), they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matt. 19:6.)

Tell me, when man separates what God has joined together, is that sin? Remember that sin is transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). Obviously, to divorce is to sin.

But brethren have reasoned out some doctrine for themselves which makes this plain teaching hard to hear. Let us deal with some questions then:

1. Does this mean that one in a divorced state is in sin?

Jesus is referring to an act, a specific one-time dissolving of the marriage bond. The divorced state is not the point here. The one divorcing is the point. The one committing the crime is the guilty party.

2. Would repentance require reconciliation?

No. The apostle Paul by Christ's authority says, "But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband." (1 Cor. 7:11.) A change of heart and sorrow for sin must take place for salvation (2 Cor. 7:9), but celebacy is plainly allowed by the Lord after a divorce (Matt. 19:12). But reconciliation should be the most desirable course.

3. What about the exception Jesus makes in Matthew 19:9 and 5:32? Is Jesus legislating sin here by allowing divorce?

Of course not. It is God's law that defines sin for us since transgressing it is what constitutes sin (Rom. 7:7). And the one who makes the law can certainly make exceptions to it, as is the case with God's command for Abraham to offer his son Issac as a burnt offering (Gen. 22).

As a matter of fact, the sin of separating what God has united is committed in the act of fornication. Therefore the innocent spouse can legally divorce and remarry without the remarriage constituting adultery against the prior spouse. What allows the remarriage allows the divorce in the first place. The severing of the marriage takes place in the fornication.

4. What about those who find living with their spouse dangerous?

The Lord recognizes a possible need for temporary separation even among the best of marriage partners. But the commitment to one another remains intact (1 Cor. 7:5-7). Many psychologists will tell you that it takes commitment from the spouse to help a marriage partner overcome destructive behavior. When one needs to get out and get help, may God grant the person speed to accomplish this. But unless fornication has been committed, the marriage vows must be honored (1 Pet. 2:21-3:9).

5. What about those remarried but in adultery? (Mark 10:11-12). Can these divorce without further sin if divorce itself is sinful?

The point Jesus makes with the Pharisees is, what God has joined together let not man separate. God has had no part in joining two people who have no right to each other in His sight (1 Cor. 6:15). The dissolving of the adulterous remarriage could be and should be immediate (Rom. 7:3; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). This would be righteous, not sinful.

May we never hold such a view of holy matrimony as to allow either in teaching or in conscience that which God hates. May His will, not ours, be done.

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Catholic Church Converts

Ette, Nigeria. Through the efforts of native Christians working through World Bible School in Anambra State, Nigeria, an entire Catholic church of about 130 in membership has been converted. In a document dated September 9, 1985 the building and grounds of what was formerly the St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church at Ette Centre have now been transferred to the church of Christ. The document states in part, "We, the entire foundation members and officers of St. Theresa Catholic Church have today formally transferred and changed the name of our church to church of Christ Ette. We have also decided to abide by the doctrine of the church of Christ according to the pattern of the New Testament."

Ghana Campaign

Ghana. A 30-day World Bible School campaign was conducted in Ghana during August and September, 1985, resulting in 778 baptisms. Jake Coppinger, international director for WBS follow-up programs also reported that during the campaign the gospel was preached to approximately 90,000 non-Christians.

Hazelip to Succeed Collins

Nashville, Tenn. Harold Hazelip, currently the dean of the Harding Graduate School of Religion, has been selected to follow Willard Collins as the next president of David Lipscomb College. Collins, who has been president since 1977, is retiring in accordance with the school's mandatory retirement policy. Hazelip's appointment will become effective in September 1986. He will be Lipscomb's 15th president.

In addition to his work as dean of Harding Graduate School, Hazelip is also the national speaker for the Herald of Truth television series. Collins has been with Lipscomb since 1944, serving as Vice-President from 1946 until his appointment as president in 1977.

Missionary Statistics

Manaus, Brazil. According to statistics presented by Carl Mitchell in a lecture at the Pan-American Lectures November 3-9, the churches of Christ are losing ground to Protestant and Catholic mission work outside the United States. Concerning churches of Christ in 1985, Mitchell reported that: 1,750 members are required to support one missionary. Only 5.5% of church funds are spent on foreign missions. 95% of church of Christ preachers minister to 5% of the world's population.

Regarding other religious groups, Mitchell offered the following statistics taken from 1979 information:

There are 81,500 Protestant missionaries abroad (as compared to 1,099 church of Christ missionaries, including wives).

There were approximately 132,000 Catholic missionaries abroad.

The average Protestant church spent an average of 14.7% of church funds on foreign mission work.

The statistics, although somewhat dated, reflect a disturbing lack of emphasis and initiative on the part of U.S. churches of Christ for doing foreign mission work.

Church Recognized in Hungary

Budapest, Hungary. For decades the church in Hungary had to meet secretly in homes, but last December 22, Christians met publicly for the first time. The church has been granted government permission to rent a church building for public worship purposes. However, the church of Christ has not yet received official recognition by the government. That action will likely follow soon.

Hans Novak, who spent 13 years in Europe in addition to making annual trips throughout Eastern Europe since 1970, says that "if we will use the opportunities the Lord gives us, the church can become too strong for them to push us around again if they try." He expressed concern that the move toward a more permissive climate toward religion might be a political ploy and that the government might again restrict the actvities of churches in a few years. Therefore, he believes that the present opportunity is a very important one.

News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte. Westside held a one-day workshop on February 15, featuring Albert Gardner of Spartanburg. Brother Gardner presented three sermons on the future of the church. Former minister Al Furline will speak at Westside's homecoming, May 4. David Myers of Bardwell, Kentucky, will lead singing.

Winston-Salem. Ricky Dunn has begun work as minister of the South Fork congregation. Brother Dunn and his wife, Titia, have two sons.

Rockingham. Ralph Gilmore from Freed-Hardman College will be the session leader at the Third Annual Youth Dialogue April 11-13.

Statesville. Broad Street church has appointed three deacons.

Raleigh. A brief note in the Brooks Avenue bulletin reports twenty baptisms at the Polk Youth Center. The church has an ongoing program of evangelism and worship at the center.

Charlotte. John Iveson will preach in a tent meeting — campaign April 13-25 sponsored by the Parkway congregation.

West Jefferson. A Personal Growth Workshop will be conducted April 21-25 with brother and sister M.F. Norwood teaching men's and women's classes. A Ladies Day is set for May 17 and Wayne Miller will begin a gospel meeting on May 24.

Cary. Rick Poole will be the featured speaker at a Youth Rally April 18. He is from David Lipscomb College.

NC Baptisms

Archdale, Charlotte, 1; Westside, Charlotte, 1; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 23; W. Jefferson 2. Total: 27.

Charlotte, Providence, Rd.

JOHN RISSE, REPORTING: The family of God continues to grow at Provience Road church of Christ. We rejoice as God has again added to our number. In the month of January we had nine baptisms, eleven families placing membership, six responding to the invitation and three new births.

Highpoint, NC

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SOUTH CAROLINA

Greenwood. Arthur Howard's new telephone is 229-4018.

Lexington. David Pharr will preach in a meeting April 18-20.

Winnsboro. Tragedy came to the church in the murder of a sister. Lillian Keisler was a devoted member of the congregation. She was killed apparently by a troubled man she was seeking to befriend.

Columbia. A Bible Bowl quiz contest will be held at St. Andrews Road congregation on March 22.

Rock Hill. Tim Senn of Freed-Hardeman College has been appointed summer youth minister at Charlotte Avenue. Tim is the son of Jerry and Brenda Senn of Hendersonville, NC.

S.C. Baptisms:

S. Pinckney St., Union, 2; Myrtle Beach, 4; Summerville, 2; Essex Village, Charleston, 2; Northeast, Taylors, 2; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill, 2; Crawford Rd., Rock Hill, 1; Winnsboro, 2. Total: 17.

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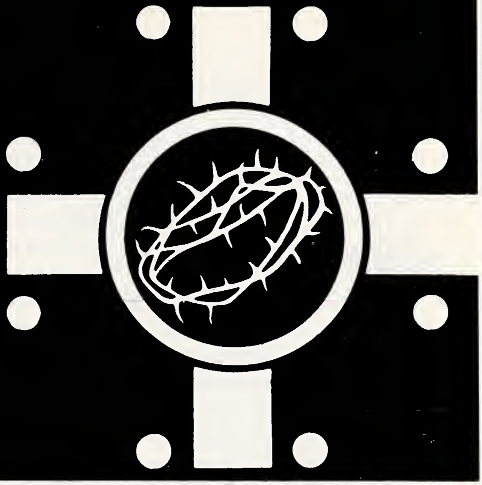

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BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED

1.	God	Rom. 8:33
2.	Christ	Matt. 1:21
3.	The Holy Spirit	1 Cor. 6:11
4.	The Word	James 1:21
5.	Preaching	1 Cor. 1:21
6.	Hearing	Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6
7.	Faith	Rom. 5:1
8.	Love	1 John 4:7
9.	Repentance	2 Cor. 7:10
10.	Confession	Rom. 10:10
11.	Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
12.	Blood	1 John 1:7; Rom. 5:9
13.	Name	Acts 4:11-12
14.	Grace	Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8-9
15.	Mercy	Titus 3:5
16.	Hope	Rom. 8:24
17.	Works	James 2:24
18.	Endurance	Matt. 10:22
19.	Life of Christ	Rom. 5:10
20.	We Save Ourselves	Acts 2:40
21.	The Gospel	1 Cor. 15:1-2; Rom. 1:16
22.	Obedience	Heb. 5:8-9; Rom. 6:17-18
23.	Keeping His Commandments	1 John 3:24
24.	Doing Righteousness	1 John 2:29

editorial

Acts 2:38 and Baptism

According to Mark, Jesus said to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16.) Here we see that Jesus predicated salvation upon two conditions, faith and baptism. But many people, even those who profess to follow Jesus as Lord, deny that baptism has anything whatsoever to do with God's plan to save from sin. Since these conditions are a part of the Great Commission which the apostles were to commence carrying out on the day of Pentecost, there could be no better way to understand what Jesus meant than to see what the apostles, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, understood Him to mean. Did they understand that Jesus meant for them to condition salvation upon both faith and baptism? We do not have to speculate about the answer to this question. All we need to do is to go to the first sermon preached under the commission and the answer will be given in no uncertain terms.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost and along with the other apostles, preached Christ crucified. This meant that God had provided the means of redemption from sin through the precious blood of Christ. In his sermon he convicted them of the sin of crucifying the Lord of glory and called upon them to now acknowledge Him as their Lord and Savior (Acts 2:36). When they heard him and recognized the fact that they had sinned, they cried out and asked what they must do. In the context one cannot miss the fact that they wanted to know what they must do to be saved from their sins. It is important just here to remember what Jesus had said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Now acting under his understanding of these words, and authorized to tell them what they must do, what will Peter's reply be? Read his answer for yourself:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.) In view of the commission under which he was preaching, and in view of the questions he is answering, could any reasonable man misunderstand Peter's words? Could any honest truth seeker fail to see that he made both repentance (faith is implied, though not stated) and baptism conditions of remission of sins? Peter clearly states the condition upon which they could receive the remission of their sins (which is the same as being saved). The conditions are: (1) all of you repent, and (2) everyone of you be baptized. No remission is promised to the penitents only. No remission is promised to the one who is baptized without repentance. Remission is promised to the ones who will repent and be baptized.

To evade the force of this, denominationalists make a ploy on the preposition "for" by saying it means because of. While this is often the case with the English word "for," the Greek word from which it is

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translated is **eis** and it invariably points forward, not backward. But beyond this, the text itself shows that what repentance is for baptism is also for. That is, repentance and baptism are for the same purpose. If baptism is not essential to remission, neither is repentance. If repentance is essential, so is baptism. If one is a condition, so is the other. Who would be so bold as to deny the necessity of repentance? But to do so is the only way one can remove the necessity of baptism from Acts 2:38.

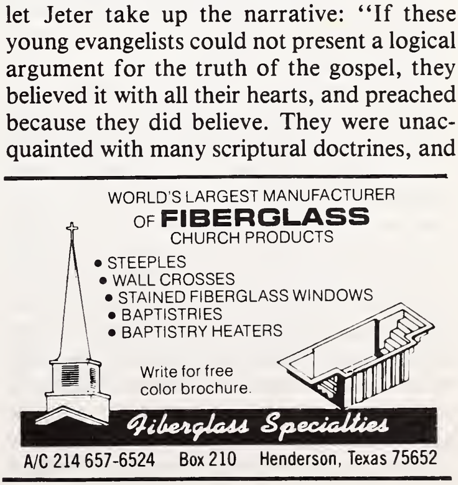
We must conclude therefore that when carrying out the Great Commission, Peter and the other apostles understood Jesus to have made baptism a condition of salvation. If this is what Jesus meant (and it is), and if it is what the apostles understood Him to mean, who are we to question it? And how could one be saved without submitting to it?

Successful Preaching

Few preachers today are what one could call succcessful in the fundamental purpose of preaching. Many are successful — successful as public relations men, as pulpit oratored, as authors, as sermon preparers, as providers, as organizers, as leaders, as money raisers, as visitation experts, as workshop speakers and directors, as business men, as salesmen, as teachers, and a thousand other things, but most are abysmal failures at the one thing they are sent into the world to do, namely, to preach the gospel in such a way as to lead lost souls to a saving knowledge of truth. In short, as preachers we can do almost anything well but save souls. Why is this? We do not have all the answers, but we believe that one large factor is a misconception of what all preachers should be. The modern preacher must be learned and polished, pleasing and polite, well groomed and with faultless speech. He must be able to mix with high society and converse with scientists. Little or no concern is given to sincerity, love of truth, and an unabated desire for the salvation of others. We are more concerned with what school he attended, how well he speaks, the kind of mixer he is, than how many souls he has led to Christ.

We are in the process of reading the biography of Dr. J.B. Jeter. Now we are aware of the fact that most of you never heard of J.B. Jeter. He was a powerful Baptist preacher during the early days of the Restoration Movement. He wrote an infamous book called **Campbellism Examined.** Moses E. Lard, a contemporary of Alexander Campbell, was asked by Campbell to review (and refute) Jeter's book. Lard did so, and his book, called **A Review of J.B. Jeter's Book Entitled Campbellism Examined,** is a restoration gem. Lard closed his review with the following pointed but potent sentence: "These are a few of the effects to be ascribed to Mr. Jeter's book; and with the simple statement of them we now take leave of, both him and it, feeling that in the one we part from a misguided man, in the other from a graceless thing."

Of course we agreed with Lard's statement that Jeter was a misguided man — a woefully misguided man. But it might be possible for us to learn something about preaching from this misguided preacher of well over a century ago. In telling of his conversion, Jeter told of a "revival" which swept through his community, county, and other parts of the state when he was 20 years old. One of the results of the "revival," according to him, was that many young men began preaching who were imperfectly equipped for the work. But they were extremely successful because they were plain men preaching to plain people. But here we let Jeter take up the narrative: "If these young evangelists could not present a logical argument for the truth of the gospel, they believed it with all their hearts, and preached because they did believe. They were unacquainted with many scriptural doctrines, and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especially with the proofs of their divinity, but they understood the way of salvation. If they could not contend with astute skeptics, they could guide the honest, earnest inquirer to life eternal. Their sermons were impressive, rather than instructive, and were noted, not for the variety, but for the importance of the truth they conveyed. They had learned the corruption of their own hearts, and the fearfulness of their own guilt, and could testify, from sweet experience, the power and freeness of redeeming grace. They went forth to their work plainly clad, without conveyances, and some of them without a pocket-Bible or a hymnbook, but with glowing zeal for the salvation of souls.''

Could it be that we are not more successful than we are because we demand that all preachers be capable of meeting the most learned on logical grounds (and a vast number ought to be so equipped) and we expect the most unlearned to understand and appreciate the logic of the learned? Why not encourage everyone who has a fire in his bones to speak out, to preach the glorious gospel of Christ in his own way to people on his own level? If one knows enough truth to be saved himself he knows enough truth to teach another how to be saved. If there is the love of God, the love of truth, the love of souls in one's heart, let him tell it to another, even though he may not be able to clothe the message with the organized rules of logic or with correct grammar. If he can lead another to the obedience of faith he will have saved a soul from death and will thus be a successful preacher, though barred from every learned pulpit in the land.

One would be stupid to think that preachers should not be well trained in learning, logic, and science in this modern world. Our point is not to minimize the value (even the necessity) of this. We are simply saying that in training preachers to reach the middle and upper class we may be providing them with tools that will eliminate them as successful teachers of the millions of the lower class. What we need to learn is that it is the gospel of Christ, not the language and logic with which we clothe it, that is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe (Romans 1:16). Since our sole goal is souls, we need to be careful lest we become so caught up in the preparation and means or reaching our goal that we loose sight of the goal itself.

Dilemma of the Pulpit

We have been preaching the gospel for 36 years (and a while before that in denominationalism) and have no plans to ever stop (although we do plan to do more writing after retirement and less, if any, full-time preaching). If we had our life to live over we would not want to be anything but a preacher. We are, therefore, neither dissatisfied nor disgruntled about the work of preaching. Neither do we have complaints to make nor an axe to grind. Brethren, in most cases, have received us and cared for us far beyond anything we deserve or could have asked. But our love for preaching and preachers have not wholly blinded us to a dilemma we have long seen and felt in the pulpit.

If there is a congregation of 100 people (take any number you choose for the principle is the same) there will be 100 different concepts of what a preacher should be, do, and say. And a small minority of these will be very vocal in trying to change him to fit their concept, and if they cannot do so they will almost invariably begin a campaign for a new preacher. And if they succeed in forcing a change, they will very soon after the new preacher arrives start the same process over again. The fact is, no man can live up to so many expectations to a high degree. He must simply learn to do the best he can and take the punches and insults that are thrown his way.

Futhermore, the way or manner one presents his lesson will be a source of agitation to some. Nearly everyone seems to know more about preaching, how it should be done and the exact approach to be taken in each lesson, than the preacher himself. This was brought forcefully home to us some years ago when we lived in Wilmington, N.C. and preached for the church there. One Sunday morning we had two out-of-state families visiting with us in the worship. They both wrote us a note as to their impressions of the worship and the church. The first came in early and sat toward the front and remained to talk and visit after the benediction. The second came in late, sat on the back seat, and was the first to leave (they spoke to no one except us). The note from the first said (and we quote from memory): "It has been an inspiration to worship with you this morning. The people are so friendly and loving, and the preaching powerful, true and life changing." The other note said, "This is the coldest and most unfriendly church we have ever visited and the preacher was so loud it sounded more like he was calling hogs than preaching the gospel."

But what is true of the preacher himself and his manner of presentation is also true of his subject matter. Rarely could a preacher preach to 100 people and present the kind of treatment of a subject that all who hear him will feel satisfied with. Some in the pew will say that it is too heavy on doctrine; others, not enough practical application; still others will complain because it did not address directly their particular need on that particular day; others, that he is answering questions no one is asking. But others will excitingly say, "That sermon hit right home for me." A well-known preacher recently told us of a Sunday morning sermon he preached when he was much younger. One of the first to come out was thrilled and excited about what he had said. While pumping his hand vigorously he said, "Preacher, that was the best sermon I have ever heard in my life. It has really helped me get a new perspective on life. I will be a better man for it." But another came out (he was either an elder then or was later appointed to the eldership) and said, "That was the sorriest sermon I have ever heard from the pulpit. It had no redeeming qualities whatsoever." Who was right? Was it the best or the worst of sermons? Perhaps both, because it was tremendously meaningful to one and worthless to the other (and the remainder of the audience probably fell somewhere between these two extremes). And there is the dilemma of the pulpit.

We all need to understand that there is simply no way any man can meet the particular needs of everyone present in a particular gathering of saints and sinners. He simply must preach the truth and address the needs as he sees them (and his vision may be terribly limited). Some of the needs he will mend; some he will miss. Any church or group who expects a preacher to fill the particular needs of everyone in any one sermon is a church or a group who, because of their unrealistic expectations, will be sorely disappointed with every preacher whose services they may obtain.

They Sold Their Property and Brought the Money

David Pharr, Rock Hill, S.C.

Acts 4:34-37 provides a beautiful description of the generosity of Jerusalem Christians in providing for the needs of the poor. In particular consider how "as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold. . . ." It was and should still be the disposition of Christ's followers to want to provide for the unfortunate (James 1:27; Gal. 2:10; 6:10). The generous response of brethren in recent times to send aid to the hungry of Ethiopia is thankworthy and surely similar good works ought to be supported (Titus 3:1).

There are some critical observations, however, that I believe need some consideration. In any enterprise, especially when it is a new approach, we should carefully determine whether it is unquestionably Scriptural. Unless there is Bible authority no work is a good work, no matter how desirable the end results may seem to be. It is folly to assume that the end always justifies the means. Some time ago, when a congregation in western South Carolina held a yard sale to raise funds for a building, I was opposed — not because we do not believe in buildings for worship, but because the fund raising method was without Scriptural precedent.

In the description in Acts 4, the individuals handled the real estate transactions. Then they gave the money. The church did not set up a real estate program, acquire properties and have a land sale. Neither did they (as would be a more modern parallel) have the women bake cakes and have a pastry sale. It would be extreme to suggest that one could not contribute property instead of cash. It would also be extreme to conclude that the church should not make a prudent and expedient disposition of such property. But such an incidental transaction would be a far cry from involving the church in an organized program for such transactions.

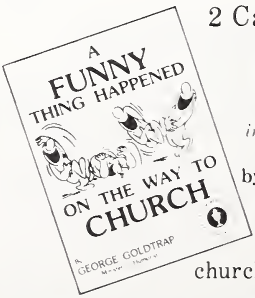
The Holy Spirit has given us a principle to guide us in the collection of funds. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him. . . ." (1 Cor. 16:1-2). When brethren practice this with the liberality that is also commended by the Spirit (2 Cor. 8-9) there will be sufficient money to do all that God wants us to do. The worldly approach of trying to get money from Christians and others by means of gimmicks instead of free-will giving is unscriptural and unprofitable. Let us be content to do God's work in God's way.

It should also be observed that in Jerusalem there was no evidence of pressured solicitations. The opposite is suggested when Peter told Ananias, "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power." (Acts 5:4.) People need to be taught liberality. They should be persuaded publicly and privately to give generously. When, however, a person only gives because he has been solicited in a way that puts him in an awkward position if he refuses, he has not given because of liberality but because of pressure.

The world has effectively used such pressure tactics. They will, for example, have young people make contacts with cookies for sale, car washes, bike rides, walkathons, etc. It is hard to turn down a youth who is working for a "good cause." I have no general objection to such gimmicks being used by the world's organizations such as Christian schools. But the church is a holy institution, operating under spiritual, not fleshy, rules. Brethren perhaps should ask themselves where some of their fund raising plans came from — the world or the Bible.

It is vital that we teach our young people that the church must do more than merely talk about the needs of the lost and hungry world. Too often we have been better at rhetoric than at action. Who, therefore, would quarrel with the need for teaching youth their duty and of showing them practical ways to be involved. Is it not, however, more in keeping with Scriptures to teach them to give sacrifically out of their own money, to learn to do without something they want for themselves, rather than involving them in a plan that is only a gimmick to solicit other peoples money? The former is unquestionably the Scriptural approach. The latter lacks Scriptural authority in both its spirit and the details.

Our brotherhood seems to go through phases and extremes. There was a time when many seemed content to do little to help the suffering people of the world, feeling that at least we were not doing anything unscriptural. Now the trend is changing. There is a refreshing desire to do great things to help in many lands. To God be the glory for all the good that is done. But let us not lose sight of our New Testament heritage. Let us not steal away the glory due Him by substituting the methods of men in place of the simple plan that He has provided.



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Our Adoption Into God

Bill Griffin, Spartanburg, S.C.

There are four distinct types of adoption in the Scriptures for our consideration. The first is the adoption of children into our home as Moses was adopted into the house of Pharaoh by Pharaoh's daughter (Exodus 2:10). This is a real responsibility and one perhaps not meant for everyone.

A second form of adoption is of a whole people. This is what Paul spoke of, "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons." (Rom. 9:3, 4a.)

A third form of adoption is of the saints in the final judgment. The Bible states plainly, "We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." (Rom. 8:23.)

The final form of adoption to be considered is spiritual adoption of repentent sinners. John records, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become, the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13.) Perhaps the best example to show our spiritual adoption is this passage, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:26-27.) Consider this passage, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Gal. 4:4-7.) It was God's plan and purpose that we should become His sons, "He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will." (Eph. 1:5.)

We need something for our adoption into God. The old Testament writer stated it like this, "Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy path. Lead me in thy paths, and teach me." (Ps. 24:4-5.) The nobleman of Acts 8 was reading the Scriptures when Philip ran to him and heard him read. Philip asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I expect some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." (Acts 8:30b-31.) We must get into the book and let it guide us. We should actively seek help in understanding as did this man which led to his conversion and adoption as a son (Acts 8:37-39).

We must obey the word of God and not the commands of men. The warning of the Lord is simple, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.)

The Bible describes clearly the privileges of the adopted. Paul wrote, "And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:18.) To be sons and daughters of God must be our goal. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Rev. 21:7.) "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14.)

God expects certain duties of the adopted and perhaps the most important is this, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut. 6:5.) We must never bring shame on His name or His church, "A son honoureth his father." (Mal. 1:6.) We will keep His will and obey His voice; "Obey my voice . . . and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you." (Jer. 7:23.)

God is eager to adopt each and every person on this planet we call earth (John 3:16). He wants all to find life in Him. He demands that His children have lights in their lives that shine. "Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." (Phil. 2:15.)

The fact is that we are all children and we all have a father. He is either the God of the Bible or the evil one of the Bible. Will you serve God or the devil? Choose this day and and may you be brave enough to stand with him of old and say, "For me and my house, I will serve the Lord."

"If"

Jim Stutts, Whitehouse, Fla.

There is no question about whether or not the Bible delegates authority to the eldership in the local congregation. **Hebrews 13:17** emphatically states that the eldership has the right and responsibility to rule the congregation within the framework of the Scriptures. By the same token, the members of the church are to be in subjection and obedience to those they have selected to oversee them. To do otherwise is to disobey God.

Problems continue to occur in far too many congregations over eldership authority. Many elders have simply resigned when the congregation rebelled against their decisions, thus either dissolving or weakening the eldership. Disharmony, hard feelings and even split have resulted when elders have "stood their ground" instead of reversing an unpopular decision.

We wish to raise a question which when Scripturally and reasonably answered may help to insure a stable eldership and a peaceful congregation. The question is, "Do rulers of the congregation have Scriptural authority if they are not qualified men?" To ask it another way "Is the congregation bound to obey its elders when they do not match the Holy Spirit's specifications as given in **1 Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1:6-9**?"

Churches Without Elders

A common notion in our brotherhood is that a congregation is not a church of Christ unless it has elders. Such is pure nonsense in view of the fact that our Lord added to the church in Jerusalem, daily (Acts 2:47) **without elders**! Futhermore, it is obvious that for a period of time **every** congregation existed without elders until such time that men qualified themselves and were thus appointed. If the church at Crete was established when the Cretians mentioned in Acts 2 "scattered" back home (Acts 8:4), then the church in Crete existed possibly 25-30 years without elders! The point is, the Scriptures do not deal with time but qualifications in regard to elder's appointment.

The Best in the Congregation Argument

We recall working with an elderless congregation having many fine Christian men, but not one meeting the family qualifications of **1 Timothy 3:3-4**. A good intending brother moved in from an area where most all congregations had elders. Before long this former elder informed the men of the congregation that we were not the true church without elders and that he would go elsewhere if we did not rectify the situation soon. We replied by informing him that not one

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man was qualified. He replied that we should merely appoint the best in the congregation. To this we replied, "The best are women, should we appoint them?" The brother went elsewhere! We have often wondered how many churches have merely appointed "**the best they have**," thus ignoring the Scriptures. Are such men truly elders? If so, would women be? We think not!

The Preacher's Responsibility

Titus 2:5-6 gives the solution to this problem so the appointment of name-only, unauthorized men may be avoided. These verses authorize the preacher to do two things: (1) Set in order the things wanting. (2) Then **after** this is accomplished, ordain elders. Could it be that we have caused leadership problems because either the preacher failed to obey this injunction to first bring about order in the body, or conversely, the members prevented him from doing so. Regardless, the "setting in order" must **preceed** the "ordaining of elders."

Every City

Was Titus commanded to ordain elders in every city? If so, then maybe those who say, "A church without elders is not a true church," are right. But note the first word of verse 6: "IF." This word has a bearing on the appointment of elders! This word is followed by the plain requirement of God for an elder. Thus, elders were to be appointed in **every city having qualified men**, not in every city!

May we recognize that it is better to be unorganized Scripturally than to be unscripturally organized. "If" can make the difference!

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

On Jordan's Banks

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, N.C.

The river Jordan is the most famous river on earth. It does not owe its fame, like the Mississippi to its great length. The river Jordan is not very long and no boat for commercial purposes ever floated on it. Neither does it owe its fame, like the Tiber, Seine, or Thames, to the fact that some great city like Rome, Paris, or London has stood on its banks. It does not owe its fame, like the Amazon to the width, or like the Hudson to its beautiful scenery. The Jordan stands out because if its association of thoughts in the minds of believers.

These thoughts are well known to all Christians, for whenever and wherever we read or sing of the Jordan there is a strange mingling of the ideal and the real; and every one alike regardless of his station in life catches the one grand association of thoughts that it contains. Israel could not cross it alone, and neither can we. If we would have the Lord with us when it comes our time to cross, we must have been true followers of Him all the way; and we can do that only by doing as He has told us (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-42).

As believers, all of us imagine ourselves standing on the banks of the Jordan, and at the same time feel ourselves standing on the brink of that dark river separating us from heaven. When we hear that song, "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand," we look over the hills of the earthly Canaan, and gaze upon the blooming field of the everlasting paradise of God. When Israel had wandered until they were within full view of the land of promise, they must yet cross that dark and swollen river before they could enter into it. If they had gone into that river just as they

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were, with none but their own strength, they would have been washed away, the nation would have perished. But, God was with Joshua and the Israelites and He caused the waters to stop flowing above where they crossed over to the other side. This miracle could not have happened except by the hand of the Lord (Joshua 1-3).

When you and I shall have wandered on our pilgrim journey, no matter how long, we finally must come to that which is properly called the deep dark river, that we must cross. If we plunge into it in our own unaided power, we will sink and rise no more. This is walking through the valley of the shadow of death. If we have lived according to the precepts of our Lord, we will fear no evil, because He will be with us. We will then emerge safely into our promised land. The Israelites were able to cross the Jordan because God was in their midst and standing by Joshua their leader. If you and I will be able to cross the gulf that inevitably will confort us and stand on the other shore, we can only do so if God is with us when we make the plunge.

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
and cast a wishful eye,
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
where my possessions lie.
O'er all those wide extended plains
shines one eternal day;
There God, the Sun, forever reigns,
and scatters night away.
Filled with delight, my raptured soul
would here no longer stay;
Tho' Jordan's waves around me roll,
fearless I'd launch away.
We will rest in the fair and happy land,
by and by,
Just across on the evergreen shore,
Sing the song of Moses and the Lamb,
by and by,
And dwell with Jesus evermore."

Conviction vs. Convenience

Johnny Melton, Statesville, N.C.

There have been many sermons preached about Felix. Governon Felix had the opportunity to hear Paul preach the gospel. With him Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgement. The message hit home. So moved was Felix that he trembled. But he was not ready to obey God. His words have lived in infamy since that day, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." (Acts 24:25.)

We have rightly shown the fallacy of choosing convenience over conviction when talking with folks about their initial obedience of the gospel. No right thinking person would encourage a penitent sinner to delay his obedience. And when we have heard that there may be those who have been presumptious enough to refuse baptism to an adult who professes faith in Christ, we have been moved to righteous indignation.

However, exchanging convenience for conviction after baptism is apparently quite acceptable.

Those responsible for scheduling church activities (from gospel meetings to skating parties) must be exceedingly cautious lest they conflict with some other organization's previously scheduled activity. Now that's not so bad. There are worthwhile activities that Christians can participate in that are not connected with the church. However, the rub comes when God's people repeatedly opt for the secular instead of the spiritual when forced to choose. Or else, after carefully avoiding conflicts, someone stays home because they have "just been on the go too much." Again,

Needed

Six church pews 16' long, or any length shorter than this. Robbinsville, N.C. has a building in which to worship, but we desperately need seating. If you can help, please write J.W. Luttrell, 14 Forest Lakes, Robbinsville, N.C. 28771 or call 704-479-6929.

we are not against saying no on occasion to a worthwhile activity in order to spend time in the family circle. But why can't some other activity be sacrificed, rather than that sponsored by the church?

The attitude that many take to church activities (regularly scheduled worship and study periods as well as special events) is this: "If I have time and I don't have anything else to do, I might come." With that kind of attitude it is not surprising that the church is not growing, and is, in fact, loosing ground in many places.

If the church is to flourish, if saints are to grow, then conviction must replace convenience in our interpretation of a genuine Christian life-style.

Keeping Our Charge

William James Scott, Georgetown, S.C.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

Let us consider closely what the Holy Spirit is telling us here. We are being charged before God and Christ to preach the word that has been given to us. To be instant (be ready at any given time or place, 1 Peter 3:15; Col. 4:5-6), to reprove (to establish what has been established, confirm what has been confirmed), to rebuke (correct someone, tell them they are wrong, by our love and compassion for their well being) and to exhort (build up those who are keeping themselves in the faith, praise them, commend them for their love and faith in Christ as the Holy Spirit did there in 1 Cor. 1-4; 1 Thess. and 2 Thess). And we are to do it all with longsuffering (be patient, kind, considerate, loving, compassonate toward those we reprove, rebuke and exhort the same way Christ is with us before and after our conversion). How many times do we forget the key word longsuffering. Wasn't that what Christ showed us before we accepted His gospel and even after we accept it. How many times could we have been cast aside by Christ because of our pride, our stubbornness, our foolish arrogants but He did not shake the dust on us; neither should we shake the dust on each other or those outside of Christ. It's never too late until the day of death. Should we not remember this more often?

We are also to do it all with doctrine (our life-style according to the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:16, we are to do the things we learn; we are to be the things we preach, James 2:12-26).

He further tells us why we are to do these things. Some of our brethren and the world would not endure (they will not put up with, follow, or do) sound doctrine. It will interfere with their life-style, maybe they do not want to give up what they must for Christ. They will keep to themselves teachers (they will find someone somewhere who will tell them it's all right to believe what they want to believe and it's all right to do what they want to do). They will turn away their ears from the truth and be turned to fables. (Many are those who want signs and proof such as miraculous gifts still given to men.)

How sad but how true of the world and we hate to admit it but also the Lord's church. Let us all keep the charge set before us with all longsuffering and doctrine.

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What Is It Like to Be a Chaplain?

Thomas C. Vail, Ft. Bragg, N.C.

The life of an army chaplain is not an easy one. Often waking before 0500 hours in the morning to enjoy a vigorious period of exercise with my battalion — and ending the day sometimes well into the wee hours of the next morning. After beginning the day with physical training (PT for short), I return to my office for a few minutes of devotion; Bible reading and prayer; hopefully prepared for the challenges of the day. Each day is unique and full of surprises. I never really know what to expect. I spend much of my time in counseling, visitation, paper work, monitoring the work of my assistants and the like. The tempo of work is fast paced and it seems everything must be done yesterday. Paying close attention to detail and the problems of coordinating staff actions can be trying on any man's soul.

You see, in the army there is one chaplain for about every 700 soldiers. Roughly speaking, there are about 1465 chaplains in the army. Of which 20 are members of the church of Christ. To become a chaplain one has to have completed an advanced degree consisting or 90 graduate hours in theology from an accredited institution. I received my M.Th from Harding University in May 1984. The perspective chaplain then needs an endorsement by their faith group certifying them as a minister in good standing. Our endorsing agent is Dr. John W. Holton an elder in one of the churches in Washington, D.C.

The challenge of being a chaplain can be a double-edged knife. On the one hand you are ministering your faith group and on the other hand you are a soldier. Both sides of the chaplains' life carry great demands and responsibilities. The chaplain functions not as a line officer (and will never command) but as a special staff officer who keeps the battalion commander informed about the religious, moral, morale and ethical needs of the command. My leadership is strictly by example — Christian example. The chaplain lives by building personal trusting relationships with those in leadership positions. This is not unlike ministry in a local church or any organization. As an agent of change within the army system, it is often a lonely job which few understand or really appreciate.

I have several on-going programs designed to evangelize the soldiers in my battalion. These programs include:

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Studies, Chapel Services, Hospital and Home Visitation, Children Worship, Adult Religious Education, Work Area Visitation, Retreats and Tract Distribution.

I would like to highlight one area that has been very fruitful in reaching out and touching lost souls. It has been my tract ministry. The Beck Avenue church of Christ in Panama City, Florida has provided me with tracts. I hand out **Up Reach** magazines and materials published by Pathway Evangelism which are written by Joe Barnett. I never seem to have enough. I use two two-track racks. One set-up in my battalion headquarters where my office is located and the other is in the army hospital.

Being a chaplain reminds me of Paul's discussion of becoming "all things to all men." This does not mean that I compromise my stand on the gospel, the church, or the ideals of restoring New Testament Christianity. Becoming "all things to all men" is the process of identifying with soldiers and adapting to their needs. This may include jumping out of perfectly good planes (I am airborne qualified), to field exercises when it's very hot, very cold, and raining. By participating in the everyday life of being a soldier, I identify with my people which opens new avenues for reaching lost souls. The soldiers respect the chaplain who is willing and able to participate in the same training they do.

I have discovered other chaplain's are open to discussing religious and theological issues. The mutual respect we have for each others beliefs brings about a lively field of discussion. Though not often ending in agreement, we understand and respect our differences. Because of these discussions, the training and education I received from Harding Graduate School has proven to be excellent. And I highly recommend any of our ministers, elders, and church leaders to seek further study beyond the college level.

Two churches in Fayetteville have been especially supportive of my work at Fort Bragg. The Helen Street church and the Spring Lake church have been wonderful. My family attends the Helen Street church where I teach the Wednesday night high school Bible class and preach whenever they have a need.

Please pray for my ministry.

Emil Newton Lorren

Payne Daniel, Raleigh, N.C.

Brother Emil Newton Lorren passed from this life last August 15. He was not only a devoted servant of the Lord but a devoted husband and original member of what is now the Brooks Avenue church of Christ.

From a humble Christian background in Alabama, Brother Lorren followed the railroad to Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1924; and in 1930, brought his new bride, Ruby, to a railroad house at Neuse, North Carolina. From this faithful union of more than 55 years, the Lorrens became the parents of four Christian daughters. There are 12 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

Brother Lorren had a great love for the church family at Brooks. From a situation where only a few were gathered together in 1947 to a vibrant congregation of more than 600 saints, he was affectionately known as Grandpa Lorren.

Even after the passing of Brother Lorren, Sister Ruby continues to provide meals for family, neighbors, preachers, struggling college students, and down and outers. One or

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two potential son-in-laws were mightily influenced by fried chicken.

Even at 90 with failing eyesight and loss of hearing, Brother Lorren would go fishing. If you went with Grandpa fishing, you were almost guaranteed to catch fish and get a Bible lesson in the bargain. He was a great fisher of men and well known as a man who would share the word.

During his 75 years as a Christian, Brother Lorren seldom missed the worship service nor would he ever be late. His love for everyone, especially young people, was a powerful influence and only the final chapter in this earthly life could extinguish his light. The seat by the side aisle is empty now. The hearty greeting and handshake is only a memory, but the congregation he helped to found continues to grow mightily in the Lord.

Backfire

Letters to the Editor

Dear Howard:

I took the liberty of reading the preface of your **Commentary on Romans** (which I found most interesting) to my class yesterday. We had 21 in class and more than two-thirds wanted a copy. Send us 15 copies. — Ken Willis, Chattanooga, TN.

The commentary continues to sell beyond our fondest expectations, but we need scores of teachers to do what brother Willis did and help us spread a good thing around.

Dear Brother Winters:

Enclosed is a check for $25 for **Carolina Christian** — use it as you think best, and place me on the list for a copy of your **Commentary on First Corinthians.** Your **Commentary on Romans** is the most valuable commentary I have ever studied. — Philip M. Stonestreet, Frederick, MD

It is letters like this that intensifies our desire to retire from all other work and spend the remainder of our life writing. The only thing that prevents it now is that small matter of earning a livelihood.

Dear Brother Howard:

Mrs. Fuhry and I are very concerned and interested in the continuation of **Carolina Christian.** With this in mind we pledge $125.00 over the period March 1 through December 31, 1986. . . . I will re-state my thinking made at the beginning of 1985: If every subscriber to **Carolina Christian** would purpose to give some amount the financial problems would be solved. Surely each reader could give $10 over the full year. That is but 85¢ per month or less than 3¢ a day. Who is there among us that cannot do that much? Then if each congregation which receives the magazine for its members either through the bundle or direct mail method would plan to give a minimum of $25 throughout the year, this could assure the paper's continued publication. — Henry Fuhry, Swannanoa, NC

Very few have contributed more to Carolina Christian than brother Fuhry and we deeply appreciate his help and the suggestions he has often made. As our readers know, the editor has, over the years, opposed the church contributing to human institutions such as Carolina Christian. Recent years has caught us rethinking our position and softening our opposition. However, we cannot in good conscience yet feel comfortable with this practice. But we do think you have a right to see and consider brother Fuhry's appeal.

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, N.C.

Dorris Library Donated to DLC

Nashville, Tenn. A "priceless" collection of Restoration Movement periodicals and books has been donated to David Lipscomb College by Charles Dorris, son of the late C.E.W. Dorris. Dorris was a longtime minister among churches of Christ who graduated from Nashville Bible School, now David Lipscomb College.

J.M. Powell, Restoration Movement scholar working to build Lipscomb's library of Restoration materials, said the value of the collection cannot be overestimated. "There is no collection in the world like this. . . . In my judgment it is the most valuable collection of its kind in existence." Among the most valuable of the materials are two complete sets of the **Gospel Advocate.** The collection also includes a large number of volumes and periodicals that are extemely rare. Willard Collins, Lipscomb President, called the Library "one of the prize collections of Restoration books in the entire brotherhood."

The volumes will be used by students and researchers, but will remain in the special collections area of the Lipscomb library.

Herald of Truth Gets 7,660 Responses

Abilene, Texas Herald of Truth officials report more than 800 weekly responses to their full page ad in the December issue of **Reader's Digest.** That represents a total of more than 7,660 responses. Inquiries have come from all 50 states and 13 foreign countries.

Thousands Obey In India

Fairles, W.V. Brother Gene Clemons reports that he and brother Willie Holcomb recently spent a month in Hyderabad, India. During the trip 5,930 were baptized and 133 new congregations were established. Several of those converted were denominational preachers.

For years one of the criticisms of the Indian work has been the high drop-out rate. However, Charles F. Scott, who has been active in mission efforts in India, reports that the drop-out rate there is not greatly different

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from what it is in America (where 50% of adult converts fall away within five years of their conversion). The scale of receptivity continues to make India a prime target of mission efforts.

Church Grows in North Sumatra

Medan, North Sumatra. Gary Soehner, missionary to the Indonesian province of North Sumatra, reports that since 1980 there have been several hundred baptisms and several established. Since the beginning of the North Sumatran work, there have been 1,478 baptisms and 14 churches established.

Bible Printing Planned for China

Dallas, Texas. The Seventh & Beech church of Christ in Durant, Oklahoma, and International Bible Foundation, Inc., jointly announced December 3, 1985, the securing of contracts for the printing and distribution of Bibles in China.

International Bible Translators, Inc., and its team of Chinese translators, led by Stanley Morris, have completed the simple Chinese Bible (New Testament) and the revision of the existing Chinese Union Bible (New Testament). The immediate goal is for 400,000 copies of the new **Inernational English** Text (which actually contains two New Testaments, Chinese and English in parallel columns) to be printed. The cost will be $400,000. The larger goal is to provide 10 million copies to the Chinese people in 1986 and 1987.

The Chinese people are now emerging out of a society that has in the past sought to largely suppress the Christian religion, but with the new tolerance by the present government there is a spiritual awakening that may be unsurpassed in the annuals of history.

Editorial Book Views

A Commentary on Isaiah, Homer Hailey; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506; 539 pages, Cloth $17.95.

Books, like men, come in all sizes, shapes, and degrees of usefulness. But now and then one comes along that stands head and shoulders above others in its field. Homer Hailey's **Commentary on Isaiah** is such a book. Those who have (or have used) his commentaries on the Minor Prophets and Revelation know that here is an author from whom one can expect the very best. He has never disappointed us. But perhaps he has reached a new height of his life's work in this book. It is a verse by verse commentary on the grand book of Isaiah, and, as the extension of its title states, "With Emphasis on the Messianic Hope." To enhance its value the contents of each chapter are summerized in a brief heading and then the chapter is divided into its several parts. This is a great aid to study. For example chapter 5 is headed, "The Vineyard and Its Fruits." It is then subdivided into: Songs of the Beloved and His Vineyard (vv. 1-7), The Harvest: Wild Grapes! Six woes! (vv. 8-23), (The six woes are then listed and discussed separately), A Terrifying Judgment (vv. 24-30). While it is not expected that everyone will agree with every minor detail, the author believes and loves the Bible, is conservative in all his comments, scholarly in his approach, and gets to the heart of the book. He tackles the difficulties and deals adequately with them. On the whole he is an author you can trust who has produced a book you can use, a book from which you can derive a lifetime of both pleasure and profit. We commend it without reservations.

Imperfect Mates — Perfect Marriage, Diane Hampton; Whitaker House, Springdale, PA; 120 pages, paper, no price given.

The author of this book is married to an imperfect mate. So is her husband. So are all others who are married. But that is no excuse for having an unhappy home. Homes are made, not by perfect mates, but by mates who use their imperfections as stepping stones for growth. That growth, that willingness to roll with the punches, is what makes marriages exciting and challenging. This author will be an inspiration to you and her book will help you reconcil your "irreconcilable" differences and reach your "unreachable" potentials. It is a good book and one you will be glad you found, read, and applied.

Tough Questions — Biblical Answers, Jack Cottrell; College Press, Joplin, MO; 122 pages, paper $3.95.

This book deals with two areas of major concern to all Christians, namely, (1) issues relating to marriage and sexuality, and (2) problems of stewardship economics. In the first the author deals forthrightly with marriage, the meaning and morality of sex, homosexualism, divorce and remarriage, and the male and female roles. In the second he tackles headon the tough subjects of work, labor strikes, leisure time, property, capitalism, poverty, and ecology. In all cases he seeks to find the Biblical answer to each problem because he believes the Bible solution is the only correct one. While not totally agreeing with each conclusion, you will profit greatly from a study of this book.

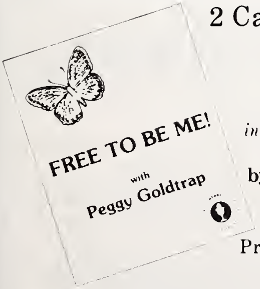
The Revelation of God in Nature, Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson; Apologetics Press, Inc., 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery AL 36117; 22 pages, paper $1.

The authors of this brief treatment of a fascinating subject do a remarkable job in showing how the creative God has revealed Himself by the designs in creation. There cannot be a design without a designer; but the whole universe, and all that is in it, show design everywhere. Read this book and you will marvel at the handiwork of God.

Contributors

Each contributor of $25 or more (to help us publish 1 Corinthians and ultimately to get the paper on a self-sustaining basis) will be listed in the paper and will receive a free autographed copy of **Commentary on First Corinthians** as soon as it comes from the press. We hope many of you will want to join this number.

Emily S. Brandt	$ 25.00
Burl Curtis	$100.00
LaRue & Mary Burke	$100.00
J.C. Townsend	$ 10.00



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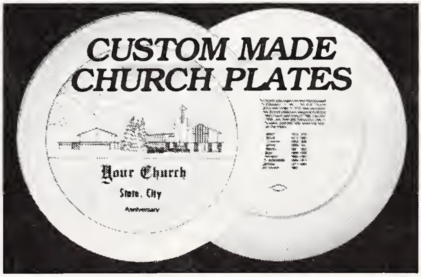

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News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, S.C.

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, S.C. 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte. George Benfield has been added to the eldership at Westside.

Wilson. A.C. Carpenter will preach in a gospel meeting May 11-16.

Statesville. Jack Simons will preach in a meeting at Broad Street April 20-23.

Gastonia. Jimmy Green has been nominated for the 1986 edition of **Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.** Jimmy is a student at Alabama Christian School of Religion and formerly served as Youth Minister in Gastonia.

West Jefferson. The previously scheduled Ladies Day has been cancelled.

Jacksonville. The Roosevelt Road church contributed $10,000 in March to the Campaign for the Chinese Billion, a plan to print and distribute Bibles in China. They have also set a target for May 4 to raise another $10,000 for the same purpose.

N.C. Conversions:

Brooks Avenue, Raleigh, 3; Providence Road, Charlotte, 3; Archdale, Charlotte, 2; Helen Street, Fayetteville, 1; Northview, Statesville, 1; Westside, Charlotte, 1; Pine Valley, Wilmington, 1. Total: 18.

Rockingham, N.C.

DAVID HOOKS REPORTING: Last month we had 26 of our men and women united at Care Inn (Nursing Home) here in Rockingham for a one-hour singing of some old and familiar Spirituals.

The occassion was one of tremendous joy and spiritually uplifting. The response was overwhelming as tennants were continually being rolled out in their wheel chairs as the auditorium was filling. Those who could (in our audience) would sing along and after all the books were passed out, folks began to double up and some of the older folks just sang from memory. It was very heart warming to see their faces light up with joy and their hearts reassured and warmed by the reminder of a loving and gracious God who could and would take away all tears and sorrows. Nothing is more gratifying than to see their eyes glow as they would painstakingly and slowly raise stroke and arthritis crippled arms to clap joyous hands after singing their favorite hymn.

We will be doing this service on a regular basis as we will meet with these wonderful folks on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 3:30 p.m. and raise our voices to God together in song and in prayer and praise.

We would ask the prayers of all our brethren everywhere for this wonderful work and many others we have begun.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Greenwood. The congregation that has been meeting on Maxwell Avenue has moved to a new location. The new facility is on Mt. Moriah Road, off Highway 221. Hosie Byrd is the minister.

Greenville. The Northeast elders have announced plans to employ a counselor to assist families which need guidance.

Spartanburg. Central plans a youth rally May 23-25. Ernie Thigpen is now serving as an associate minister.

Lexington. Plans have been announced for a new facility during 1986.

Summerville. David Wheeler will preach April 20-24.

Lexington. Allen Whitacre has been added to the eldership and Jim Pike and Bryan Dooley have been named deacons.

Charleston. Essex Village will host a meeting May 4-9 with Billy Davidson speaking.

Rock Hill. Charlotte Avenue has recently completed an expansion of parking areas and will begin remodeling on the building in a few weeks.

S.C. Conversions:

Northeast, Taylors, 2; Fairview, Spartanburg, 1; By-Pass, Union, 2; Edgewood, Greenville, 1; Central, Spartanburg, 1; Summerville, 2; Cokesbury Road, Greenwood 1; S. Pinckney Street 3; Myrtle Beach, 1. Total: 14.

S. Pinckney Street, Union, S.C.

W.E. PENLAND, REPORTING: God continues to bless us wonderfully! February 23, 1986 was another milestone. Another record attendance at the S. Pinckney Street church of Christ. Ours was a wonderful day, filled with love and expectancy. Many visitors were here from the city. They enjoyed a tremendous fellowship feast along with our brethren. We had 145 in attendance.

Woodruff, S.C.

JESSE HAM, JR. REPORTING: I spent seven and a half years at Woodruff as the minister and one of the elders. During our time there the church experienced substantial growth numerically and especially spiritually. We feel that the church there is one of the strongest in the brotherhood, though not one of the largest in number. There are about 45 in regular attendance and the contributions are above average for its size. There are two elders, Richard Sanders and David Trip. The church receives outside support from three congregations in the Carolinas.

On January 12, I resigned to work to meet the challenge of working with the Augusta Road church in Greenville. The church here has a good attitude toward its future growth and I am looking forward to working with them.

My wife and I moved here on February 17. Our new address is 7 Horseshoe Circle, Greenville, S.C. 29605. Phone 803-277-5717. We covet the prayers of the saints here and elsewhere as we labor in the Lord's vineyard in Greenville, S.C.

* * *

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VOL. 28, NO. 5, MAY 1986

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Lillian Keisler
See pages 12 & 13

editorial

Acts 22:16 and Baptism

When Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16), did the apostles (and later the early church) understand Him to mean that baptism was an essential part of His plan to save from sin? To answer this vitally important question we need only go to the book of Acts where we have an inspired record of the apostles as they carried out the Great Commission, as they told men what they must do to be saved. The very first sermon preached under the commission (Acts 2), the people were convicted of crucifying the Son of God. They cried out and asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter, with the words of the Lord still burning in his heart, said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:37-38.) This should put the answer beyond dispute: the apostles **did** understand Jesus to condition salvation upon obedience to His command to be baptized. But not being content with one verse alone, let us look now at another, this time Acts 22:16. The passage reads, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

A little background will be helpful. These words were spoken to Saul of Tarsus (later to become the apostle Paul), who had up to this time been a very zealous Jew in the business of persecuting Christians. With authority from the court, He was on his way to Damascus to bind, imprison, and even put to death Christians who would not renounce their faith. But as he journeyed something happened that changed his whole life . . . and thus changed the whole course of history. The Lord appeared to him in a light so bright that it blinded him and told him to go into Damascus where he would be told what he must do in order to have his sins forgiven. Because of his blindness he was led into the city. There he fasted and prayed for three days. In this condition he was waiting on the word of God (through a gospel preacher) to be delivered to him and tell him what he must do. A man by the name of Ananias was sent to him. When Ananias came he spoke to him saying, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

There are some things that should be especially noted about this case:

1. Paul evidently became a believer on the Damascus road. We have yet to meet anyone who would deny this.

2. The fact that he fasted and prayed for three days abundantly shows that he had repented, that is, he had changed his mind to the extent that it would lead him to change his life.

3. He was told by the Lord, not that he was already saved, but to go into Damascus and he would be there told what he must do.

4. While in Damascus, fasting and praying, he did not believe or understand that he was saved. There remained something for him to do.

5. When Ananias arrived, he was willing to submit to Christ as Lord by doing whatever He commanded.

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6. In instructing him as to what he must do, Ananias said, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

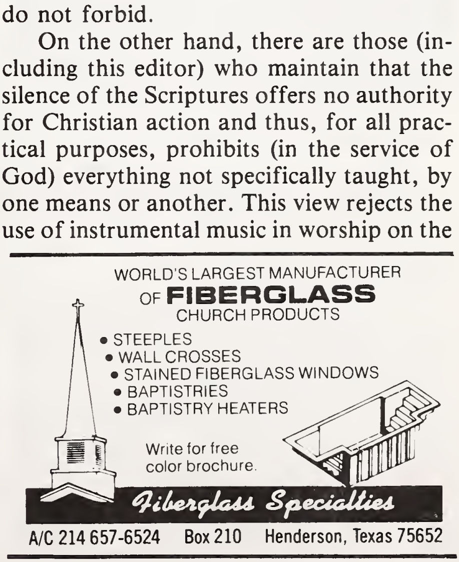
By taking a more detailed look at Acts 22:16 we can surely see that both Saul and Ananias believed that salvation was conditioned upon baptism by the Lord Himself. When Ananias asked, "And now why tarriest thou?" he was simply asking, "Why wait?" the time was right for him to do the Lord's will. But he did not stop here. He informed him as to what the will of the Lord was — what it was that he must do. What Ananias told him was clear and easy to understand. He said, "Arise (from your position of fasting and prayer) and be baptized (immersed in water) and wash away your sins (be baptized in order to have your sins remitted or forgiven), calling on the name of the Lord (calling on the Lord to keep His promise to save, as made in Mark 16:16, by arising and being baptized)." There is simply no easy way to misunderstand the import of this verse. Saul was to be baptized to wash away his sins (a metaphorical expression meaning to have sins remitted or forgiven).

One more thing: this is Paul's own account of his conversion. It was made after he had done most of the missionary work recorded in the book of Acts and even after he had written the book of Romans, in which some erroneously conclude that he taught salvation by faith alone. But not so. Paul himself tells us that he, as a penitent believer, had to be baptized to wash away his sins, to have his sins forgiven, just as Peter has commanded on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). This shows conclusively that Paul, as well as the other apostles and the whole early church, understood the words of Jesus in the Great Commission to mean that baptism is a part of God's plan to save. And anyone who can explain away the force of this, and thus say that baptism is not essential and thus no part of God's plan to save, is an expert at twisting the Scriptures and wresting them from their intent. Such a one, having absolutely no respect for what the Lord Himself has said, would have no problem whatsoever in explaining away every single teaching in the Bible that he wishes to dispose of. All who do so are not teachers of divine revelation but twisters of the word, explaining it away rather than explaining it to be the salvation of souls.

The Silence of Scripture

The recent meetings between selected members of the churches of Christ and the Christian churches in an effort to work out some means of unity between us have resulted in a resurgence of some issues, such as the use of instrumental music in Christian worship, not the least of which is the place of the silence of the Scriptures in both our belief and practice. It seems strange that anyone who is devoted to following the Bible would turn around and advocate the practice of that which the Scriptures do not teach. But that is the way it is. There are those who teach that the silence of the Scriptures is all the authority one needs to practice anything (in the service of God) not specifically addressed or condemned. They say, in essence, that if the Scriptures do not prohibit it we have the right to do it. Thus they claim that they have the right (which is to say that the Scriptures authorize them to so act) to use instrumental music in worship, not because the Scriptures authorize it by command, example, or necessary inference, but because they do not prohibit it — that is, the Scriptures are silent pertaining to its use. And the silence of the Scriptures authorize (permit) that which they do not forbid.

On the other hand, there are those (including this editor) who maintain that the silence of the Scriptures offers no authority for Christian action and thus, for all practical purposes, prohibits (in the service of God) everything not specifically taught, by one means or another. This view rejects the use of instrumental music in worship on the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grounds that it is unauthorized, and that no one can obey the will of the Lord by doing that which is unrevealed in the inspired Scriptures. Between these two groups, the issue is plainly drawn: the one says we will serve God by doing that which is not revealed and the other says we will serve God by doing only that which is revealed. As long as these two attitudes are maintained, there is absolutely no grounds of unity between us. Even if we agreed to work together by leaving off the instrument, there could be no unity because our difference in attitude (sometimes called a hermeneutical principle) would result in division on a thousand other fronts.

Because of this hard line (which is drawn by necessity) there has now developed a third group, mostly among us (while still small in number, it shows signs of growth), who say in essence that our differences arise over a matter of opinion only. That is, the hermeneutical principle (the attitude one takes toward the silence of the Scriptures) is not of divine origin. Thus each one has a right to his own hermeneutics, and that all of us ought to recognize and respect this. And in so doing, even though we differ about the function of the silence of Scripture, we can be united because our differences are in the category of opinion. That is to say that our differences came about as a result of our attitude toward the silence of the Scriptures, and since the Scriptures are silent pertaining to their silence, our attitude (hermeneutical principle) is only a matter of opinion. Consequently any conclusions we reach from our hermeneutical principle can be classed as nothing but opinion.

But there is a fatal flaw in this third attitude, namely, the Scriptures are **not** silent on their silence. How we treat the silence of the Scriptures is not a matter of opinion; it is a matter of faith (belief of Bible teaching). While it is not our aim here to discuss this at length (for a more detailed discussion of this concept see our editorial, "That Hermeneutical Principle," in the June 1985 issue), we believe the following proves our contention: (1) Christians are to walk by faith in all that they do in God's service (Rom. 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:7). But faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). How then could one walk by faith in doing that which the Bible says absolutely nothing about? (2) We must prove all things and hold fast that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21). How do we prove all things? Not by the silence of the Scriptures but by what they actually say and teach. Furthermore, we are to hold fast that which is good. But what is good? That which is proven by the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Thus a thing is good only if it is taught in the Scriptures. But if we are to hold (practice) only the good we must reject all that is not good — all that is untaught. Thus the Scriptures teach that untaught things are to be rejected. We see no escape for this conclusion.

Remember then, the Scriptures are not silent on the silence of the Scriptures.

So You're New In Town . . .

Sara Kemp, Stanley, N.C.

We have become a moving society. Every day families pack up their belongings and move to a new community.

Moving includes finding a new place to live — but that's only the beginning. We then must have the electricity turned on, the telephone installed, a new place must be found to do our banking, we must locate grocery stores, drug stores, a family doctor must be found, and on and on goes the list. For the Christian, this also includes finding a place to worship.

"Settling in" with a new family of Christians can sometimes be difficult for the newcomer. It can also be lonely for the wife and mother. Generally, a move to a new location is the result of the husband's job. This means that many of the adjustments and arrangements will fall on the wife to accomplish.

Consider the things you could do to help your sister-in-Christ to make her move and adjustment an easier task:

1. Let her know that you care. Give her your telephone number but also get her number. Remember, she's probably not going to make the first move to call.

2. Tell her the grocery stores where you prefer shopping. If she's not familiar with the chain stores in the area, this will help her tremendously.

3. Give her the name and telephone number of your family doctor and/or pediatrician. A personal recommendation is always appreciated.

4. Call her regularly just to see how she's doing. Remember, she doesn't know anyone well enough just to pick up the phone to "chat."

5. Get her involved in any ladies activities at the church. Even though these are open to all ladies of the congregation, many people still need to be asked.

6. If she has small children, get her in touch with some of the young girls in the congregation who are responsible baby sitters.

7. Invite her and her family into your home.

8. Take her with you when you make a visit to someone who is sick or shut-in. This will not only help her learn the town, but will give her a chance to know some of the members.

Remember, your sister in Christ needs you as a friend "during the week."

The Lost Book

Albert Gardner, Spartanburg, S.C.

One of the most interesting and enlightening statements is made by Hilkiah in the restoration period under King Josiah. "I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord." (2 Chron. 34:15.) King Hezekiah was a good king but his son Manessah and grandson Amon, encouraged idolatry. During that time the copy of the law was lost.

When Moses wrote Deuteronomy he gave a copy to the priests (Deut. 31:9). Since the temple had been unused for divine purposes for some time, it was likely the copy of the law given to the priest which was kept by the ark of the covenant that was lost and is now found.

It seems so tragic that the law was lost in the house of the Lord. The "friends" of the book had lost it! It was lost in the most unlikely place — in the house of the Lord. The book was necessary to the restoration of the temple and the worship of God. Later, Jeremiah joined Josiah in teaching the true way of God to the people.

We are reminded of Ezra reading "in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." (Neh. 8:8.) Restoration could come only with an understanding of the word of God. And it still does.

Can we lose "the book of the law in the house of the Lord" today? Well, of course, we have many copies of the Bible in our homes and at the church building, so we are not likely to lose it in the same sense they did. But is it possible for us to lose the Bible in some sense?

We can lose the law of the Lord in the house of God in several ways:

1. **We can lose it by not receiving it as the word of God.**

Paul said to the credit of the Thessalonians that you "received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." (1 Thess. 2:13.) It is sad to see people treat the verbally inspired word like it is the product of men. Outright rejection of the Bible is no worse than quietly changing it. The Bible is rejected when some form of evolution is taught instead of Moses' account of creation.

2. **We can lose it by a failure to study it.**

If I do not apply it to my life, of what value is it to me? When Paul was ready to leave the brethren from Ephesus, he gave these parting words, "and now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts 20:32.)

3. **We can lose it by a failure to live it.**

A knowledge of the word is essential but knowledge alone puffs up. Many are turned away not by truth taught but by the impure life of the teacher. Jesus taught this well with His "mote and beam" lesson in Matthew 7.

4. **We can lose it by a failure to teach it.**

If we fail to teach one generation there will be complete apostacy. After Joshua died there arose a generation that knew not God. Our children must be informed about where we came from and why we are where are. They need to know church history. One reason the Jews left God is that they did not know their history and all God had done for them.

Thoughts to Ponder

Noah's Sacrifice

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, N.C.

Salvation has been one of the dominant words in Bible history since the fall of Adam and Eve. We gather from the words of Jehovah in Genesis 3:15 that one of His final acts in connection with that tragic event was to devise a plan whereby the human race could be saved. The words are: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The words were addressed to the serpent which, with the inspiration of Satan, had deceived the woman, and had succeeded in plunging the head of the race into sin and alienation from God. The conflict between the two "seeds" took place during the earthly ministry of Christ, and resulted in the destruction of the works of the devil and the "plan of salvation" for man with the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross for forgiveness of man's sins.

Satan to be sure still has power to tempt us, but if we are willing to put our trust in Jehovah, while doing our best to learn His will and serve Him, the devil will not be able to adversely affect our relationship with the Lord. Salvation is the aim of Jehovah, and there is no power which can defeat Him in this respect. God never saves anyone against his will. In writing to the Philippians, Paul said, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:12.) The writer of Hebrews says, "By faith Noah being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with Godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." (Heb. 11:7.) The principle of salvation is stated by Jesus in these words: "Not every one that said unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.)

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The return to dry land. "And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dried. And in the second month, on the seventh and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry." (Gen. 8:12, 14.) It appears that Noah and his family went out of the ark on the twenty-seventh day of the second month of the six hundred and first year of Noah's life.

The command to go forth from the Ark. "Then God said to Noah, Go forth from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring forth with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh — birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth — that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth. So Noah went forth, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. And every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves upon the earth, went forth by families out of the ark." (Gen. 8:15-19.) It is well to note that the occupants of the ark came forth, at the command of God, "after their families," which implies an orderly departure. God has always been, and still is, and always will be, a God of order; and He certainly expects the same attitude to characterize His people (1 Cor. 14:40). The antedeluvians did not believe the preaching of Noah regarding the forthcoming flood, and it is not reasonable to suppose that any of them assisted Noah and his sons in getting together all the animals, birds, creeping things, etc., and properly placing them in the ark. It is proper to assume that Noah was aided in his efforts, to some degree at least, by the miraculous power of Jehovah. And if that is true, the same assistance, no doubt, was given in getting everything out of the ark, in the same orderly fashion. At any rate, all the people and all the lower creation were soon on dry ground again, and the great work of repopulating the earth was immediately under way. God ordained that the work would be continued by the natural process of descent from parents, whether human, animal, bird, or other such life was and is involved. The wickedness of man has frequently caused God to change His purposes and plans for His people, but nothing has ever caused Him to alter His basic purpose and plan regarding the perpetuation of the universe as such. Jehovah never makes experiments, as we understand that term; and He never repents as man does. God's own nature is the constitution of the universe, according to which all things were created and perpetuated, and all divine laws enacted. It follows therefore that the principles which underlie the laws which He ordains and gives to govern the universe are as immutable as the nature of God, and as enduring as His eternal throne. It was often necessary, throughout Bible history, for God to change His laws, that is, His statutes, for His people; but He has never changed His principles for anything. Law is the medium through which a principle is applied. Law is enacted and can be repealed, while principle is eternal and remains immutable. Man was originally made in God's likeness, and it was Jehovah's purpose that man should live with Him forever. However, man was and is a free moral agent, with the power of choice; and since he chose (and still chooses) to yield to the tempter, the result was and is alienation from his Maker. But this did not cause God to cease to love man and plan for his salvation. He saved all the righteous from among the antediluvians. Jehovah could not be the God that He is, while at the same time refusing, or even neglecting, to make every possible effort for the salvation of all men. The principle which actuates God in this respect was forcefully expressed in His words addressed to the rebellious people of the Northern Kingdom: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I cast thee off, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turning within me, my compassions are kindled together." (Hos. 11:8; 1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9.)

Noah's sacrifice and Jehovah's gracious promise. "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in his heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Gen. 8:20-22.) It is interesting to observe that this is the first time that the term "altar" appears in the Bible, although it is very probable that Cain, Abel, and other antediluvians also made use of the altar in their worship. There is something exceedingly beautiful and interesting to know that the first care of Noah was the return of thanks to God for His mercy and goodness upon him and his family. During the age of the patriarchs the head of a family acted as priest; and as this solemn act of devotion on the part of Noah for himself and his small household, was designed to be a full expression of him and their religious feelings — an acknowledgement of weakness and profession of repentance, faith in God, and thanksgiving for temporal as well as spiritual mercies — every kind of clean animal and bird was included in the sacrificial offering that was required to give completeness to the ritual design. The sacrifice was both for atonement and to express thanks. In saying that Jehovah smelled the sweet savor, the idea is that He was well pleased with the offering which Noah had made. That this sacrifice prefigured that which was offered by our blessed Redeemer in behalf of the world, is sufficiently evident from the words of Paul in Ephesians 5:2: "Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." The fact that Jehovah has promised never to destroy the earth again by a flood is, of course, a gracious promise; but it does not imply that He either regretted the destruction, or that He would be more tolerant of future generations. He recognizes that man's moral condition will not, generally speaking, improve, since the imaginations of his heart is evil from his youth. God has other means of destroying a corrupt earth, as Peter makes plain, "This is now beloved, the second epistle that I write to you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles . . . and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3:1-7.) It is an historical fact that the unfaithfulness of the Lord's people has been punished by prolonged droughts and crop failures. While it is true that distressing times may come, the faithful child of God can find encouragement in the fact that the Lord will never forsake him, so long as he does his best to be pleasing unto Him (Matt. 6:25-34 and Phil. 4:19).

A righteous man. "Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generation." (Gen. 6:9.) A righteous man is one who does right; and, to do right is to keep the Lord's commandments. Because Noah took God at His word, and carried out His will, God regarded him as righteous. It is because of this characteristic that Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah. God always looks with favor on those who do His will; and He regards with great displeasure those who disobey Him. Noah is described, not only as a "righteous" man, but as one "perfect in

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his generation." The word righteous suggests stability of moral determination; the "righteous" are those who conform to God's law; the "perfect" are those who are mature in holiness and character. The phrase "in his generation" means the people of his age. It contrasts his character with those of other people of his period. It is not implied, that Noah was sinless, being like God. It is simply meant that he fully complied with the Lord's will and thus measured wholly to the divine standard of excellence. He stood out from his fellows because of these traits. How good it would be if all of us today would exhibit such traits of character that we are immediately recognized as vastly different from the men of the world about us!

Need Encouragement?

John D. White, Union, S.C.

Concerning our trials and tribulations, we are prone to asking, "Why me?" Martin Luther, the reformer, said, "Lord, how trivial seems my Calvary when I consider thine. For only Simon helped thee lift thy cross — but many carry mine."

Still it is not enough to merely think that Jesus will help us. We must experience it. Perhaps a careful consideration of the following thoughts will assist you today.

1. **God's comfort, instead of depression, is available.** Read Psalm 27 and especially verse 4. The psalmist placed one thought above all others. He wanted to **see** God and to **live** in the House of God forever.

2. **When penniless, know that God will provide your necessities.** Again, the psalmist is quite descriptive in relation to what God can do for His own. However, notice some key words in the psalm such as, **"trust," "delight thyself," "do good," "commit thy way," "rest in the Lord," "cease from anger," "forsake wrath."** The end result is that the meek shall inherit the earth (cf. Matt. 5:5; 6:33).

3. **Unhappy with your work, a right perspective will change your outlook.** The psalmist speaks of the one (man) who fears the Lord and who realizes the benefits of his labors. His wife and children are true rewards. He accentuates the positive while eliminating the negative (cf. Phil. 4:8).

4. **Confused feelings, learn the one lesson of 1 Corinthians 13.** To enjoy life at its best, we must learn to love like Paul did. Paul realized that even if he could speak different languages, be blessed with certain individual gifts or talents, be of a benevolent mind, or even martyrdom, all would be useless without love. Our feelings will stabilize when we learn to love others.

5. **Having trouble with selfishness, seek the wisdom that comes from above.** According to James 3, we should not be filled with pride, we should know that everyone suffers because of the tongue (speech), and that one should refrain from envy and strife. With an unselfish attitude, anyone can learn to enjoy the peaceable, pure, gentle righteousness of God. To make peace is beautiful indeed.

6. **Disappointed with your fellowman, consider Jesus.** Jesus endured all the shame, the inconsistencies, the sinful actions against Him, even the horrible death on a Cross. Why? Because He loves us and is so extremely patient with us. If we can look to Him as the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), then many of our disappointments will fade into oblivion.

7. **Feeling alone, do not despair, look to the hills.** The psalmist (Ps. 121) said that he would lift up his eyes unto the hills from which came help. His was a realization that God would always care for him, be aware of his needs, and to ultimately keep and protect him. He tells us that God is not asleep, that God is our helper, and that God will always preserve us, regardless of the time or situation.

In conclusion, encouragement is possible through right thinking. We can choose to be despondent or we can choose to be alive, enthusiastic and encouraged. Our Lord and His ways make the difference.

Are We Ready to Cast the First Stone?

Barry Fike, Rockford, Ill.

Throughout the Bible the smugness of religious people who commended themselves for their "pious" attitude was always condemned. As far as they were concerned they had all of the answers and no further truth could be found! That is the case of the "righteous" Scribes and Pharisees of John 8. Having caught a woman in the act of adultry they used the legality of Leviticus 20:10 as the basis of their accusations and sentencing. Knowing their real interest was only entrapment, Christ stated a truth that must be answered realistically in reference to our faith. "He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone at her."

Are we ready to cast the first stone? If you find anyone that is studying the New Testament, without the blinding influence of those who have already "found all the answers," you will find a changing of attitudes and traditions. Such a search is deeply rewarding for those pioneers who get out of the old rut that the brotherhood digs itself into after a number of years. We call it Restoration! Out of such honest study came a movement in which was embodied the idea of all Christians being unified by faith in God's word alone. Barton W. Stone's motto was, "Christian union and the Bible, and the Bible alone!"

I have been greatly encouraged, recently, by several brethren who have, with great effort, undug themselves from comfortable, could I call it warmed over, study and have launched out in honest and investigative study of their own faith. In doing so they have "gone against the grain" somewhat and have taken positions that leave some of their brethren scratching their heads.

Are you ready to cast the first stone at a brother who does not see eye to eye with you on marriage — divorce — remarriage, versions, capital punishment, supporting institutions, such as colleges and orphans homes from the church treasury, instrumental music, etc.? Write them up, talk behind their back, but never investigate, never search with them, never open your mind to the truth they see in the Bible. Throw a pebble of disbelief or a boulder of horror at the idea of such a thought, but always down-play honest, sincere searching in God's word. Honestly, do you really think that we are the only ones that have found the truth or even tried to search for the truth in God's word?

At one time I, too, thought I had all of the truth. When someone deviated from the "faithful" teachings, that I had **not** researched for myself but were simply handed down, I threw whatever I could in their direction hoping to "knock" some sense into their heads. Never did I sit down and honestly evaluate their position and how they arrived at it. Has the church arrived at the point to where we can comfortably sit because we have all of the truth? Ironic as it may seem we will never have **all of the truth!** We will always be lacking because we are human. Therefore, we must always be searching, seeking, honestly endeavoring to be what God wants us to be.

In the last will and testament of the Springfield Presbytery, in a section entitled "The Witnesses Address," we find these words: "We candidly acknowledge that in some ways **we may error,** through human infirmity; but He will correct our wanderings and preserve His church. Let all Christians join with us, in crying to God day and night, to remove the obstacles which stand in the way of His work, and to give Him no rest till we make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. We heartily unite with our Christian brethren of every name, in thanksgiving to God for the display of His goodness and the glorious work He is carrying on in our western country, which we hope will terminate in the universal spread of the gospel, and the unity of the church."

With complete honesty can we say the same thing? Or are we more concerned with who we are to condemn, stone, or crucify? That is not the spirit of restoration of truth.

It is the spirit of Jezebel! I was so elated at the aspect of the "Union Meetings" that have recently been going on between the "Christian church" and the "church of Christ." I have seen it, from the outside, as men who were honestly trying to find out in what way unity could be brought about since we all believe the basic essentials of Ephesians 4. Unfortunately, other of my brethren, also on the outside, have said that such meetings compromise truth and spread error. Do these brethren have any idea how long it took the leaders of the "Restoration Movement" to come to believe in baptism for the remission of sins, taking the Lord's supper on the first day of the week, and other "basic principles" that many of us have never researched for ourselves? Years were spent in a diligent search of God's word for truth. Can we not allow the same thing to happen with our brethren today?

When you come upon someone who does not agree with you totally in every belief you hold to be truth, may I ask you a question? Will you be the first to cast a stone in their direction? Or would it be better to sit down to study, to be honest, and to investigate God's word with an open and sincere mind as we tell others to do with us? What do you think Christ would do?

Another Martyr for the Number

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, S.C.

Revelation 6:9-11. Sister Lillian Keisler was killed because of her faith late Saturday night, February 8, 1986. An acquaintance who was invited into her home because he requested a Bible study tied her up and stabbed her to death.

This woman's faith and love was renowned within and without the church in Winnsboro, S.C. Her reputation was truly blameless. Her home in Winnsboro was open to all, and she was not known to turn anyone away who requested spiritual or physical food. The fact that she was absent from church services Sunday morning clued the brethren that something was terribly wrong.

Her murderer was no stranger who broke into her home. He was known to her. The hour was late. The man had a history of crime. Though perhaps the circumstances sounded suspicious, possibly even to her, yet Lillian Keisler boldly and bravely took in the person simply because he asked for help. And she was alone. How many preachers would have been so courageous for the Master?

Those who knew her said she realized the dangers of such an open-door policy. But she also knew the Scriptures, "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matt. 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 17:33; 9:24; John 12:25.)

Now lest anyone be puffed up and say, "See where her faith got her? She was asking for trouble," consider that hospitality is commanded to be offered even to strangers (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2). And who is the Christian God would call faithful who rejects a plea to study the Scriptures with a sinner (Luke 6:30-31; Acts 16:8-10)?

We are living in a dangerous world and we need to beware. But the world of the first century was also dangerous when the above commands were given. Our Lord and Example surrendered to a cross wanting God's will done. Christianity is not a safe religion. It is a religion of daring, a way that exposes one to danger in order to help even the murderous. (Remember Saul of Tarsus and the courage of Ananias and Barnabas in Acts 9:17, 27?) The smart thing is not to lock ourselves away for no lock can keep out harm. It is to be bold in faith realizing we have a better, more enduring resurrection (Prov. 28:1; 29:25; Heb. 11:35). Yes, we are to be wise as serpents, yet harmless as doves (Matt. 10:16). Sometimes that means marching right back into the city that stoned us (Acts 14:20).

Brethren, to die doing God's will is nothing to shrink from but is a glorious aspect of faith if it is done in love (1 Cor. 13:3). It will not get any easier being a faithful Christian. We in America have had it so easy. Can we stand the test? This dark world is no friend of grace. We are at war.

Let the blood of Lillian Keisler speak to you. Let it shame you for your cowardice or let it strengthen you in your renewed resolve, but let it speak. This was not an unfortunate happening to a gullable woman. This was and is the ultimate price of obedience. The salt of the earth must be applied. Use your head but let it be filled with the knowledge of God (Phil. 2:5). When all is done and said, let your desire to show love because you fear God outweigh any fear of man. As our Lord has said, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10:28.) "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer . . . Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.)

Lillian Keisler — My Friend

Craig and Charlotte Hinrichs, Winnsboro, S.C.

Lillian Keisler went home February 8, 1986. She did not die a normal death in the context of this world. Neither did she live in step with most of those about her. The best group in which to place her would be with the "others" of Hebrews 11:36-38. Indeed, the world is not worthy of people such as she. Allow me to tell you of this mild, caring woman who profoundly influenced my life and the church of Christ in Winnsboro.

Lillian, her son, and her daughter walked two miles to their first services in Winnsboro in late 1979. She had just moved to town (she would not move here until she found out that the Lord's church was meeting here), was poor, and had no car. Had we not been so small (10-12 in attendance), chances are they would not even have been noticed. She was always a low-profile woman.

In the years that followed, Lillian was actively involved in literally every area of the work of the church, in spite of some devastating personal setbacks. She taught children in classes and on the busses. Teens were frequently found in her home making song sheets and puppets, eating cookies, learning to knit, crochet or sew, and shooting baskets. When we built our building she could be seen sawing, nailing, and measuring everything in sight. Seldom did she miss a trip to a gospel meeting out of town. Never did she miss the soft ice cream at McDonalds after the meetings. She enjoyed the simple pleasures of life.

Often she would have friends, strangers, and renegades in her home for Bible study. At first I taught the studies. Later she did it herself. Recently, she conducted a number of studies during coffee breaks at work among her coworkers. She was active in our door-to-door program. Only the Lord knows how many Bible correspondence courses

We Need Your Help. Our growth has been substantial, but its future increase is threatened by our inability to raise the purchase price of a small building in which to meet in the **Hartsville, S.C.** area. We are expanding in size and need your help to continue along with our past and present growth pattern. We are busy with the Lord's work here. There is much to do. **Will you help us financially on a one-time basis?** We need to raise $67,000 in the very near future to acquire a building suitable for our purposes in congregating. We can do it with you behind us. If you desire to be a part of the growth of the Lord's church in South Carolina — please send financial help to: **Elders, St. Andrews Road church of Christ,** 425 St. Andrews Road, Columbia, S.C. 29210. — Claude Smith, Evangelist.

Lillian distributed during her time here. Only heaven will reveal her overall impact for Christ's kingdom.

On several occasions ex-convicts found food, help, and a place to stay in Lillian's home. Ignoring advice of friends, she was convinced that her caring would make a difference in their lives if she never gave up on them. One young man who is now in prison in Arizona conned her out of nearly $1,000 before he skipped town. She sent him a Christmas tree last year when she learned of his whereabouts. There was no bitterness . . . no desire for revenge . . . just a desire to show that she still cared because the Lord still cares.

Time and space would prevent my presenting the things she did for others. She made clothes, dolls, cakes, pies, and tapes of the New Testament for those that had trouble reading. At her death she had several large-print Bibles on lay-away for any she might encounter needing one. My knowledge of her doings never came from her. It always came from others. On one occasion my wife and I returned home to find a stove and refrigerator on our porch. There was no note . . . or nothing. Lillian had struck again. She died with few material treasures but quite a deposit in heaven.

Saturday, February 8, 1986, between 10:00 p.m. and midnight, a 32-year-old man asked Lillian for some coffee and wanted to talk about the Lord. This information came from his confession. He knew this was a sure way to gain entrance into her home. Opening the door she invited him in. They drank coffee. They discussed the Lord (I later saw the cups and Bible on her kitchen table). Then for some reason that only the criminal and the Lord know, the man, having tied her hands and feet, stabbed her to death.

On February 9, Lillian experienced the greatest Lord's day of her 44 years' existence. Praise God for Jesus Christ and His servants such as Lillian Keisler. Her favorite song was "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder I'll Be There." I hope to be there, too, Lillian. See you there.

Although my husband has done a fine job of writing of Lillian's life, any attempt on our part to describe her is very feeble. You would have had to know her to appreciate her. Lillian had no material things of any value often having to rely on God working through others to provide her with even the barest of necessities of life because she gave everything she gained to others. Poor in the eyes of the world, she possessed the riches of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 6:22-23. I have often wondered and marveled at her. I had long since ceased to mention things that I thought I needed in Lillian's presence because somehow, she would manage to acquire it for me and I knew she could not afford it. It did not slow her down a bit, because she was always listening and watching for opportunities to do for others. I cannot begin to imagine how much she is going to be missed by myself and by many others, even if they do not realize it now. She left us a wonderful example to follow because she was following the Wonderful Example. "For yet a little while, and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back and destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls." (Heb. 10:37-39.)

May we all be as courageous to do God's will as was Lillian Keisler and by so doing assure ourselves of a place in heaven as Lillian now possesses.

Wanted:

A minister to restart the work in the city of Burnsville, Yancy County, North Carolina. A church building is located in the city and would be ready for use after some repair and clean up.

The work stopped some three or four years ago after the last minister left the area. If anyone would be interested in this challenging work and could get support for the work please get in contact with: Thomas Wayne Tweed (704) 649-3689 or Wayne Cole (704) 645-7544. More details will be given when contacted.

"Lording It Over the Flock"

John D. White, Union, S.C.

Why do certain good men accept the responsibility of shepherding a congregation of God's people? Do they do it for recognition, reputation, respect, fame, power or simply out of love for doing God's Will? Surely, the vast majority serve in such a capacity by offering themselves in humble service to God.

Having served as an elder or overseer, this writer believes that it is a little easier for him to see the entire picture or spectrum in relation to elders and how they should serve. Still, we write with the limitations of human understanding and wisdom.

This writer has read much good material in relation to almost every aspect of God's elders within the churches of Christ. However, little has been written concerning 1 Peter 5:3. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." That it is entirely possible to lord it over the flock, is inherently taught in this passage. What is Peter's message to his fellow-elders?

First, let us define this phrase, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage" (1 Peter 5:3). It literally means the following: (1) To get into one's power. (2) To bring under, master, overcome. (3) To dominate, to be domineering. (4) To lord it over others. (5) To be dictatorial.

Second, we will examine other Scriptures where this thought appears. In Matthew 20:25-26, it is used of Gentile leaders exercising great authority. Jesus informs them that they are to be different. In Acts 19:16, an evil spirit overcame a man. Thus, our thought concerning lording it over a flock, is for certain men to completely overcome that flock to completely dominate them.

Third, what lesson is inherent in the concept of ruling, overseeing, superintending, leading or shepherding of God's flock. In consideration of 1 Peter 5:3, certainly elders are not to be arrogant and domineering. Rather, they are to lead their alloted numbers humbly and lovingly. Some will object to this interpretation, saying that elders are to "rule" over the flock. This is true, however, the Bible still teaches elders to refrain from lording it over the flock. Could our lesson of 1 Peter 5:3 be that New Testament elders are expected to be of the highest character and nobility? They are to be unlike those of Ezekiel 8:12; 9:5-6. They are to realize that God has only one flock, His. And that each group of elders are over an alloted number of brethren, placed under their charge for safekeeping. God's elders will always show themselves a working pattern for the flock. Can a man be God's elder by only attending business meetings and making himself known at every church meeting?

Fourth, elders are never to lord it over the rights and interests of their flock. Conversely, they can lead by example, by pattern, by work, with love. Yes! there are times for firmness, for defense of the gospel, but in all of these, an elder must not lord it over the flock.

Truly, elders are made overseers by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). Fleshly willingness does not constitute an elder. Elders realize that they are tending God's flock. They are not the owners. The flock does not belong to them. Jesus says the sheep belong to Him (John 10:14; 21:15). Paul mentions "the church of God" in Acts 20:28. They only tend God's flock, which was purchased with the precious blood of the only begotten Son of God (Acts 20:28; John 8:38; 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:21). In appreciation of our many godly elders, we commend them for not becoming little popes or petty tyrants or dictators over their flocks. These good elders understand the inherent lessons of Matthew 20:24-28 and 2 Corinthians 1:24. They do not seek personal fame, fortune, power, rather in humble obedience they serve their God.

Fifth, non-lording elders are those who know why and how they are to serve. (1) They serve for the right reason, spirit and attitude. (2) They serve with the right motive for spiritual and not personal gain. (3) They serve in the right manner. (4) They serve with a proper awareness that they will eventually give an answer to their Chief Shepherd concerning those souls entrusted in their care.

Sixth, good elders know that their service to a congregation is not for their profit, but for the profit of the congregation. Therefore, their service is in humility and not in lording it over the flock.

1. They realize their **duty** is to **tend** the flock. They should provide keen and constant care.

2. They realize their motive is to not serve constrainedly, coveteously or ambitiously. They serve voluntarily, sympathetically and by example.

3. They realize their hope is the crown, which means for them dignity, glory and that which does not fade or tarnish.

4. They realize their spirit of service is mutual subjection, perfect humility and lowliness of temperament.

In Acts 15, verses 13, 22, 25 we see James, an elder, speaking for the congregation. Apparently, from verse 12, everyone was included and in verse 25 it seems that all agreed on the actions to be carried out. There is no sign of James or even an apostle lording it over the flock.

How wonderful it is to serve in a congregation where elders and members are in agreement with congregational decisions. Where elders are leading by example, members are sacrificing. Where elders and members are loving one another, like Christ loves them, there is rarely a situation like the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16). Let us thank God for the many good elders who are leading and not lording, who are involved and not idle. Let us assist them in becoming stronger shepherds of God. Then individuals and congregations will be happier and more productive.

A closing thought, "To follow elders simple because they are called elders, could be folly, indeed" (Acts 20:29-30). **"To follow elders, who refuse to lord it over the flock is a blessing indeed."**

Contributors

Each contributor of $25 or more (to help us publish 1 Corinthians and ultimately to get the paper on a self-sustaining basis) will be listed in the paper and will receive a free autographed copy of **Commentary on First Corinthians** as soon as it comes from the press. We hope many of you will want to join this number.

Irene Brown	$25.00
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News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, S.C.

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, S.C. 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Statesville. A new record attendance of 203 was set in March at Northview.

Raleigh. There is an opening with the Brooks Avenue church for a campus minister.

Gastonia. Guy N. Woods is scheduled to preach in a Gospel Meeting May 16-18.

Mooresville. A Homecoming is scheduled for June 1, followed by a Gospel Meeting June 2-5. Ronnie Ulrey, who was the first full-time preacher, will be the guest speaker. On June 1, there will be "dinner on the grounds" following the morning service. At 2:30 there will be an area-wide singing.

Morganton. A Saturday program called "The Winning Day in May," involving recreational activities and fellowship, is scheduled for May 17.

Mocksville. The Jericho church will hold a devotional service on Sunday mornings at the Lake Myers Campground at 9:00. This is scheduled for the first Sunday of each month through October. Wayne Hendrix will be the speaker.

Kernersville. Sid Rogers, long time elder at Linville Forest, and his wife have moved to Sparta, Tennessee.

Asheville. Schumann A. Brewer will be the guest preacher at the Biltmore church on June 15. He will speak at the morning and evening services. This is the Sunday prior to the annual encampment at the Blue Ridge Assembly. If you are near Asheville on that date we invite you to be with us and hear brother Brewer. Brewer has been preaching for nearly 50 years and has been a teacher and speaker on numerous occasions over the past 25 years at the Blue Ridge Encampment.

Albemarle. The congregation provided a helpful and enjoyable program for the 1986 Carolina Lectures. Jim Hunter is the local minister and directed the activities. The speakers are to be commended for their preparation and enthusiasm for the truth.

Raleigh. Brooks Avenue continues an effective work at the Polk Youth Center. Fifteen young men were baptized there on April 6.

N.C. Conversions:

Hendersonville, 1; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 34; Providence Road, Charlotte, 3; Northview, Statesville, 2; Cary 2; Linville Forest, Kernersville, 5; Westside, Charlotte, 1; Hickory, 1. Total: 49.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Spartanburg. Central will host a youth rally May 23-25. Speakers will include Dick Webber and Don Williams. The Sonrise singing group will preform.

Greenville. Northview has announced the availability of family counseling by Shirley Cline, M. Ed., NCC. As a licensed counselor, Shirley has a background in personal, group, family, career and education counseling. She is well-known for her work with high school, college and young adult ages.

Myrtle Beach. Broader coverage will result from a change in the radio program. It will be on WKZQ, a 5,000 watt station.

Greenville. The Edgewood bulletin has called attention to the ninetieth birthday of G.F. Gibbs which was on March 22. Brother Gibbs was instrumental in the beginning of several congregations in South Carolina.

Bennettsville. The church has arranged for Carl Hogue to serve as minister.

Spartanburg. The Fairview congregation has signed a one year contract with WKDY AM 14 to air a fifteen minute radio program (8:00-8:15 a.m.) Sunday mornings. The Sigsbee congregation and perhaps others may join them in this preaching format. They titled the program "Speaking the Truth in Love" and began broadcasting April 20, 1986.

Hartsville. Reports from the new congregation in Hartsville indicate five baptisms through February. An opportunity to purchase a suitable building has encouraged the church to seek funds from other congregations. Claude Smith is the evangelist.

W. Columbia. The recent Homecoming at West Columbia was a success. There were 185 in attendance.

Spartanburg. Neil Gallagher spoke recently at the Fairview congregation.

Woodruff. Donal C. Webb will begin working with the Woodruff church May 10. He has been with the congregation in Newberry.

S.C. Conversions:

Central, Spartanburg, 4; North Charleston 1; Lexington, 2; Fairview, Spartanburg, 3; By-Pass, Union, 1; Northeast, Taylors, 1; Hartsville, 5. Total: 17.

Editorial Book Views

Gospel Minutes, Bound Volumes for the years 1959 and 1960; C.S. Gatlin, Jr., P.O. Box 1397, Sandpoint, Idaho 83864; $10 each.

C.S. Gatlin is doing the world a tremendous service is making available again bound volumes of **Gospel Minutes,** beginning with the year 1959. The volumes for 1959 and 1960 are now ready. Others are to follow. Those who are familiar with **Gospel Minutes** need no introduction to it; those who are not need to become acquainted with it. Each volume is a rich source of the finest fundamental writing to be found anywhere. There are scores of sermons and short articles — every issue has at least one good sermon on a basis Bible doctrine. The editor (Thurman Dillard) and his staff do not deal so much with "current issues" as with the grand old Bible truths. For this reason these volumes are just as much up-to-date today as they were when they were written. These are a rich source of preaching and teaching material that you will be returning to time and again for many years to come. We commend them to you with confidence that no other source presently available will offer to you more fundamental teaching, the kind of teaching needed to save a lost world, than these two volumes. (Order from the publisher, C.S. Gatlin, Jr.)

Raccoon John Smith, Louis Cochran; College Press, P.O. Box 1132; Joplin, MO 64802; 370 pages, cloth $11.95.

One of the most fascinating characters in the early days of the Restoration Movement was Raccoon John Smith. He was unique as a man and as a preacher of the ancient gospel. He suffered much hardship, did much good, and left behind him a legacy of

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humor unequaled by no other in the movement, except perhaps J.D. Tant. Louis Cochran, author of **The Fool of God,** a novel based on the life of Alexander Campbell, has captured the amazing and exciting story of Smith's life in this biographical novel. While it is cast into the literary form of a novel, many of the incidents are recorded essentially as they happened and the whole story is true to life and it gives much insight to life in early America and more especially to that of a pioneer preacher in the cause to restore New Testament Christianity. Those who prefer fiction to straight history or biography will value this book highly, and all who love the restoration story (a story of hardships as well as successes) will spend many hours of both profit and pleasure reading it. This is first class reading matter.

What the Bible Says About the Church, Russell Boatman; College Press, Joplin, MO; 454 pages, cloth $13.95.

While sometimes stated in a way we are not accustomed to, and embracing (or leaning heavily toward) some positions we cannot accept, the author discusses many phases of the New Testament church with both force and clarity. In eight sections, he deals with its founder, foundation, structure, entrance, organization, name, commemorative institutions (the Lord's supper and the Lord's day), unity, and mission. One thing that is conspicuously absent is the worship of the church (except for a chapter on the Lord's supper). Why? We are not certain but it may be because the group the author associates with (the conservative Christian Church) is slowly but surely coming to the conclusion that worship is no part of the structure of the church. This is done in order to maintain instrumental music in the worship. If corporate worship itself is not a Scriptural procedure, then of course innovations into the worships cannot be unscriptural. But unfortunately this position makes worship itself an innovation. What a price to pay in order to retain an unauthorized practice! However the absence of this vital part of the church should not prevent us from profiting from all the good the book has to offer. It is filled with wonderful and fundamental teaching that will make it a useful tool for anyone who wishes to be better informed on both the Builder and the building of the church.

Backfire

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir:

We spend the summer in Asheville, N.C. and worship with the Biltmore congregation. There we got acquainted with Henry Fuhry and he introduced us to **Carolina Christian.** He also presented his file of several years of back issues and we have been fortunate enough to read them. The articles by you, Henry Fuhry, and others are wonderful and we **love Carolina Christian**. Therefore we send the enclosed check (for $100, HW) to express our love. — LaRue and Mary Eva Burke, Naples, FL.

What a wonderful way to express love! The money will be applied to the effort to get the commentary on First Corinthians published. But we are still several thousand dollars short.

Dear brother Winters:

Recently the comment has been made here that **Carolina Christian** is the best publication in the brotherhood. — Criss Carter, for the Biltmore church in Asheville, N.C.

We cannot argue with that kind of comment. We only hope that many others will come to see its true value.

Dear Howard:

I am encouraged by your report on the amount of contributions received toward publication of your commentary on Corinthians. I feel sure the needed amount will be forthcoming. I also deeply appreciate the confidence expressed in me by the invitation to serve on the Board of Directors of **Carolina**

Christian. I would enjoy being counted as a part of the publication. However, I must reluctantly decline for health reasons. I do not feel that I could serve in an effective manner because of this. But you can count on me to continue to write for the paper. — Henry Fuhry, Swannanoa, N.C.

We regret that brother Fuhry's health will not permit him to serve on the Board of Directors of Carolina Christian. No one has made a greater contribution than has he. If we had only 15 or 20 friends such as he has been, the sucess of the paper would be put beyond question. May God raise us up more.

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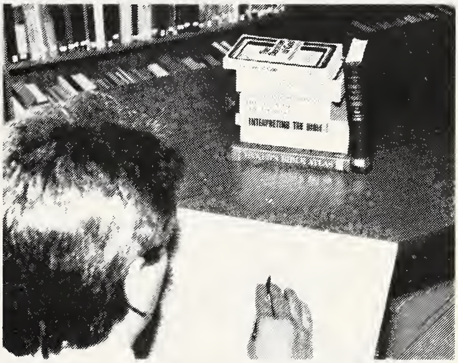

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VOL. 28, NO. 6, JUNE 1986

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Bible Majors and Bible Faculty at Freed-Hardeman College

See Article Page 7

editorial

UNITY AND EPHESIANS 4:4-6

Those who are working for unity with our estranged brethren in the conservative Christian churches (and to work for unity on Scriptural grounds would be a happy and commendable thing) have adopted some strange interpretations as bedfellows. And while we would be among the last to discourage true unity efforts, we are disillusioned by the attitude of some who seem to want unity more than they want truth. But unity without truth is more of the nature union than unity, and it is not union (in the sense here used) for which the Lord prayed and the Bible commands, but unity — a unity of faith, doctrine, and practice.

One of the strange interpretations (as far as our brethren are concerned) is the concept that the seven ones of Eph. 4:4-6 are the sum total of all that is necessary for unity. That is, nothing should be considered a matter of faith that is not fundamentally implicit in at least one of the seven ones, and consequently a breach of fellowship on any other grounds (other than a violation of one or more of the seven ones) is based on human opinion rather than on divine doctrine. While this may sound good on the surface (and if true would certainly offer more hope of a united Christendom than anything previously offered by men), it is fallacious for two fundamental reasons:

1. The passage was not written by Paul as the doctrinal grounds upon which estranged brethren could unite, although properly used they could go a long way in an effort to eliminate division. Paul's point in the whole section (Eph. 4:1-16) is that brethren are united by virture of the fact that they are in one body, the church. That is, they are united because there is but one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God. This is thus an exhortation to Christians to maintain the unity which is theirs by virture of the fact that they have obeyed the gospel and have been added to the one body. The difference then in this passage and the use the unity movement makes of it is the difference in maintaining and attaining. Thus from Paul's perspective one attains the unity of the Spirit by obedience to the gospel, the manner by which he becomes a part of the one body (1 Cor. 12:12-27); he maintains the unity because he is in one body, animated by one Spirit having one hope, serving one Lord, guided by one faith, entered by one baptism, and glorify one God. Paul's words were designed to encourage them to maintain the unity; those in the unity movement are using them as the basis to attain it. Whether we have made it clear or not, there is a difference in the two, and the "unity people" are found using a passage for a purpose other than that for which it was written. This practice has been (in other cases) called taking a text out of its context and thereby creating a pretext. (Note: we are indebted to David Pharr for this point, although he is not responsible for the way it is worded.)

2. There is a second and more serious problem with saying that the seven ones constitute the only doctrinal basis for faith and

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fellowship. The passage reads: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. 4:4-6.) We have preached and taught for more than a third of a century that this constitutes a solid and Scriptural foundation for the unity of God's people. And so it does, but there are many other Scriptures and principles that are equally as important which must be considered. But here it is our purpose to notice only the fundamental problem those in the unity movement are having (or at least should have, although they seem to be expert in ignoring it). They say these seven ones constitute the whole doctrinal basis of unity. But by what authority do they make this claim? To say that the seven ones constitute the whole doctrinal basis of unity is fundamental to their theory — it cannot survive apart from its divine truthfulness. If it is not true, if it does not constitute an essential doctrine for unity, then they have no authoratative statement for their conclusion. And this means that their conclusion is nothing more than human opinion and is therefore not binding nor is it necessary to unity. On the other hand, if it is true, one of two things must follow:

1. This authority is an integral part of one of the seven ones. But if it is, it must be an integral part of the one faith. But if so, then this makes the one faith objective rather than subjective. If it is objective faith (meaning the system of faith) then it binds everything the Bible teaches as doctrinal grounds of unity. This, most of those in the unity movement reject. They make it subjective faith. But if it is subjective faith, then they have no authoratative grounds for binding the statement that the seven ones are the only Scriptural basis of doctrinal unity. That is, to believe the seven ones are the only essentials for unity is not an essential requirement. But if it is not essential to believe this then there is no doctrinal way to bind this concept, but how can there be unity when there is no essential standard by which the essential standard of unity can be defined or bound?

2. The authority is not an integral part of the seven ones. This means that they must either bind an eighth Scriptural requirement or else their concept of the seven one being the only basis of unity is nothing more than human opinion and therefore not bound as a doctrinal requirement. But if it is not required, then, according to them, it cannot be bound on anyone. In other words, to believe that the seven ones are the only doctrinal requirements upon which to establish unity is not a doctrinal requirement for unity. This simply means that the whole concept is built upon a doctrine that is non-essential. But if it is not essential to believe it, then there is no Scriptural requirement for believing the seven ones are the only essential requirements for unity.

Our conclusion is simple: the "unity people" are either going to have to have an eighth doctrinal requirement (one not in the seven ones) or else they are going to have to say that the concept itself is not a binding requirement. In either case their present contention is abolished: for they either must have an eighth requirement (which is bound elsewhere in the Scriptures — and if an eighth is bound elsewhere, many others could be bound on the same grounds) or else their concept of only seven requirements are not divinely bound (and that which is not divinely bound cannot be a requirement for unity). As we see it then, the only possible ground for Scriptural unity is the Scriptures. If the Scriptures teach it, all must believe and practice it; if the Scriptures do not teach it, none must believe or practice it (as a religious exercise). When we all believe and practice the Scriptures, nothing more and nothing less, we **will** be united. We will then attain unity by becoming Christians; we will maintain it by remaining in the one body, animated by the one Spirit, having one hope, serving one Lord, guided by one faith, entered by one baptism, and glorifying one God.

DIFFERENCES DO NOT NECESSARILY MEAN DIVISION

Division among the people of God is positively prohibited in the Scriptures (e.g. 1 Cor. 1:10; Rom. 16:17-18) and should never be approved or practiced by any faithful child of God. It is contrary to the very purpose of the Christian system and its results is a weakened church. It makes the mission of the church far more difficult (and sometimes impossible) to carry out because it is an enemy of the cross of Christ and a destroyer of the forces to effectively preach the saving gospel of Christ. This makes it an evil of vast proportions. But it may be that in the past we have had a misconception of what constitutes division in the body of Christ, the church for which He died. Of course we all understand that division means a separation — and in our case, a separation of brethren. And often we have interpreted any differences among brethren, even in matters of judgment or opinion, as division. But does separation necessarily occur simply because brethren differ over matters of opinion (and perhaps on some matters of doctrine)? We think not.

Christians make up the body of Christ in a similar way as a husband and wife make up a marriage of home. Within that body each serves a particular function (1 Cor. 12:12-27). The members do not serve their function for the benefit of the individual member alone, but for the benefit of the whole body. That is, the hand does not serve for the benefit of the hand alone but for the benefit of the whole body. But if the hand separated itself from the body and began functioning for itself alone, apart from the body, that would be division. The body of Christ is made up of individuals who must study, think, and act for themselves. And the body is so constructed that the individuals may be on different levels of learning and maturity. This may cause them to reach different conclusions upon the same subject. This is especially true in the sphere of opinion (and perhaps even more true in trying to determine what constitutes a matter of faith and what a matter of opinion). But it is possible (in fact, an unquestioned reality) for members of the body to differ in matters of opinion (and perhaps in some matters of doctrine) and each still fill his function in the body. This is to say that differences among members of the Lord's church do not necessarily mean that the body is divided.

As an example of how this might be, we will use our own marriage and home as an example. While we consider it a lovely and happy home, we have some basic differences as individuals. We do not always agree on the best way to handle problems — this was especially true with our children. We have had some differences in our religious convictions on certain matters. But as far as we can tell that has never been a moment, since we made our vows 26 years ago, that we have been divided as a home. We have been united as a family and nothing has been permitted to separate us. Thus we can truthfully say that, because we are committed to the union formed by our marriage, the diferences we have had, whether slight or serious, have never divided us, not even for a moment.

As we see it, this same principle is true also in the church. Brethren may differ and still be united as the body of Christ — that is, they may differ and each still serve his function in the body, providing, of course, that each is serving the body instead of serving himself. Differences may and often do divide, but differences among its members do not necessaily mean that the church is divided, especially if the differences leave intact the great fundamentals of the faith.

To illustrate this, consider the following from the pen of Robert R. Taylor, Jr.: "It is a well-known fact that brother Guy N. Woods and brother Gus Nichols disagreed about whether the righteous dead go directly to heaven at death (the Nichols' position) or into the intermediate realm known as Sheol in the Old Testament and Hades in the New Testament (the Woods' view). Yet neither broke fellowship with the other and they remained the warmest and best of friends as long as the noble Nichols lived." (**A Review of "Shall We Splinter,"** p. 77.) What Taylor here calls breaking fellowship is what we mean by division. Nichols and Woods, than whom there have never been greater in the kingdom of God, differed but they did not divide. If they could differ without division, so can we, providing we love and respect each other and providing each is serving his own function in the body of Christ.

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Dead Flies in the Ointment

Martha Bentley, Cookeville, TN

"Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour." (Eccl. 10:1.) Thus spoke the wise man. Just prior to that statement he observed also that "one sinner destroyeth much good" (Eccl. 9:18). Jeremiah was much concerned for Israel because of the prophets and priests who were dealing falsely trying to heal the hurt of the people by saying, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jer. 8:11.) In his sorrow he lamented, "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?" (Jer. 8:22.) He so sorrowed over the rejection of God by Israel that he asked, "Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed?" (Jer. 15:18.) He said the people of Israel looked for peace and a time of health (Jer. 8:15) and were told by God, "Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous . . . thou hast no healing medicine." (Jer. 30:13.) However, the Lord had the necessary healing power, "For I will restore health unto thee and I will heal thee of thy wounds" (Jer. 30:17), "and ye shall be my people and I will be your God." (Jer. 30:22.)

From God has always come the healing power for all our ills. The psalmist said, "He healeth all thy diseases" (Ps. 103:3), and "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." (Ps. 147:3.) When Israel committed grievous sins and was punished with God's wrath, God was always willing to heal their broken hearts and their wounds when they repented. Just so today with the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). Isaiah tells us, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5), speaking of the Christ to come.

Christ confirmed this word when in the synagogue in Nazareth He read from Isaiah 61:1, "He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." (Luke 4:10.) Thus we have the "pure ointment" with which to heal today, the pure untainted word of God (Ps. 12:6; 19:8). Why then are not all healed since "understanding is a wellspring of life" (Prov. 16:22), and we are commanded, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17.)

Just as the wise Solomon compared "folly in one of good reputation" to "dead flies in the ointment," we can use those same wise words in our time. We can be one who attends every service of the church, reads the Bible daily, etc., yet lives no different from those of the world, and cause them to have no desire for the pure ointment of salvation. When we allow public sin among God's children to go without discipline, immodesty to go unchecked, impure speech without admonition, false and hurtful accusations without rebuke, are we not guilty of causing God's word to be hindered and His healing power rendered ineffective? Do we not thus send forth a stinking savour to those we try to teach? Truly "one sinner destroyeth much good."

Some are not healed because they are willfully ignorant of the word of God (1 Pet. 3:5). They have access to its power but scoff at the idea of a supreme creator (Ps. 14:1; 53:1). Some accept all which comes from the pulpit, failing to search the Scriptures (John 5:39), while others have hardened their hearts, refusing to see and hear (Matt. 13:15). Many do not "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5:6) attempting to be healed with little or no service to God. We who are God's people, His body, are the cause of many not having the pure healing ointment. We are constantly building bigger barns to contain our "pure ointment" saying to the lost, "Come visit our fine building and we will let you partake of a little of our store.'' Yet Christ said, ''Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel. . . .'' (Mark 16:15.) Are there not still dead flies in the ointment? Parents, what has happened to your influence? Elders, preachers, teachers, what kind of ointment are you using? Do we really care?

What God Wills; What God Does

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

For many years brethren have been disturbed about consigning disaster to God. Some have gone so far as to say that disasters are beyond God's scope in our day; and if He were involved in them, they would renounce Him. Others have blamed disasters on God by saying He either willed it or it was His fault. Both aspects of thought do not agree with the Scriptures.

The world can be a great puzzle. For instance, on a beautiful, springlike day when flowers bloom, birds sing sweetly, and the wind is calm, we may think, ''How great Thou art!'' Then we get a call. A worker who barely escaped death calls to let us know our spouse did not escape. Is the God who controls the day still great?

Or consider a severe storm which blows in from the sea, spawning tornadoes which spread over the countryside like so many giant dancing cobras. Hundreds of people are hurt. Some are killed. Then you hear the news. Your child's school has been struck by a twister. Your heart sinks. That wretched phone rings. But you hear, ''Mommy? Daddy? I'm all right. We're safe.'' And you praise with tears, ''Thank You, God! Thank You!''

Do we understand that the God who saves is also the God who kills? The power to do one demands the power to do the other. On the other hand, if both life and death are simply a matter of chance, what is the practical difference between this view and the atheist?

''But,'' says one, ''how can God will the destruction of any?''

Ah, there is the problem and the point. If God allows something or causes something, does that mean He wants it so? Let Him answer: ''For the Lord will not cast off forever. Though he causes grief, yet he will show compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.'' (Lam. 3:31-33.)

How we would be helped in this puzzle if we would turn to the prophets of Scripture rather than to infidels who believe not in the atonement or in the effect of prayer. God does act in this world causing both prosperity and adversity (Ex. 4:11; Deut. 32:1-4, 39; Job 1:21-22; Isa. 45:5-7; Amos 3:6, 4:6-13; Matt. 5:44-45; Luke 12:5-7). If you believe the Bible, you must believe this.

What God **wills** is happiness, prosperity and peace for His creation (3 John 2; John 16:24). This involves justice on behalf of the innocent (Gen. 18:20-21), and the punishment of sin (Jude 7). He wills His creation to perform according to function (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). This involves the consistency of natural law and the free will of Satan, angels, and men (Gen. 8:20-22; Job 1:9-12). He wills this temporary world to be preparation for the next eternal one (Luke 16:10-12).

God wills His people to share His glory forever, His stubborn people who love to sin (John 17:24; Rev. 22:4-5). The sin rebellion brings pain and death (Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:7-8). This is not God's fault but the sinner's. But that is all right, for our Lord has the keys to death and Hades (Rev. 1:18), and the Hadean gates will not prevail against Christ's church (Matt. 16:18). Those who love God more than life will share life with Him forever (Matt. 16:25). Whatever hardship is necessary to prepare for that life, let it come. It is better to enter into life lame or maimed or blind, rather than having two eyes or two hands or two feet to be cast into the everlasting fire of hell where God is not (Mark 9:42-48).

Yes, beloved brethren, God is in control. Yes, He brings or allows adversity as well as prosperity. But always, whatever happens is for the good of His chosen whom He loves, to teach them patience, humility, peace, the terrible harm of sin, the great need for Him (Deut. 8:3; 1 Cor. 11:29-34; 2 Cor. 12:7-10; James 1:2-4).

Truly we would hate a father who delighted in hurting his child. Yet the child in whom the father delights will be punished and disciplined according to the need (Heb. 12:3-11). God takes no pleasure in ours or anyone else's calamity. He wills it not. Yet He will allow it (as in Job's case) or even bring it to pass Himself (as in Joseph's case) so that what He **does** will, the salvation of many, will also come to pass.

So it was with the cross of our Lord. So it must be with us.

Traditions Are Not All Bad

Dowall Flatt, Chairman Bible Department, Freed-Hardman College, Henderson, TN

As the beginning Greek student quickly learns, nearly every Greek word in the New Testament has more than one meaning. Each must be looked at in its historical-grammatical context. The same inspired writer may use the identical word in different ways. Such a word is **paradosis**, commonly translated into English as "tradition." Though Paul warns against following some traditions (Col. 2:8), he commands the Thessalonians to "hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15; cf. 3:6).

With roots going back to 1869, Freed-Hardeman College has developed a number of traditions. Because so many gospel preachers have gone to the various parts of the world from Henderson, TN, Freed-Hardeman has often been labeled as "a preacher factory." Whatever the motive of friend or foe who uses that term, she makes no apology for trying to train as many people as possible to carry the gospel to a lost world (John 1:29; Acts 1:8). Freed-Hardeman, also, offers strong, accredited liberal arts and pre-professional programs with thirty-eight majors.

It is no accident that her presidents have often powerful gospel preachers. The works of such men as Freed, Hall, Calhoun, Hardeman, Dixon, and Gardner will live after this world has been burned to ashes (2 Pet. 3:10). Their influence continues to produce fruit in the present through such former pupils as Guy N. Woods, Hugo McCord, Earl West, Lowell Altizer, Flavil Nichols, Basil Overton, Harold Mobley, George Bailey, David Pharr, M.H. Tucker, James Tollerson, Leon Barnes, Peter Merrick, James Hudley, John L. Hall, and F.H. Gates.

In the presnt enrollment of 1004 students, 124 are majoring in Bible. These students come from over thirty states and six countries. They study under a veteran Bible faculty, which is the largest in the history of the school. Nine men teach full time in the Bible Department, seven others part-time.

In addition to the past and present, there is a constant need to look at the future. Two key new programs are being added this fall: (1) a major in missions, and (2) an emphasis in youth ministry.

Mothers and fathers, let us continue to encourage our sons to be gospel preachers. If those sons desire to follow the noble calling of glorifying God and serving men (Matt. 22:37-39), let us encourage them never to allow our materialistic society to quench the "fire in their bones" (Jer. 20:9). As long as this world stands, that fire must never be contained!

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Misconceptions About Salvation

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Nothing is more fundamental than a correct understanding of the gospel plan of salvation. All other commendable practices in religion and life are of secondary importance because if one is not saved from the guilt and consequences of his sins all else will be in vain. It must further be concluded that any church that does not teach the plan of salvation correctly cannot possibly be a church of Christ.

In spite of this, however, Satan has been effective in perpetuating numerous errors concerning the plan of salvation. Denominations characteristically fail to teach the truth on this and people generally misunderstand God's will in the matter. Consider some common misconceptions:

1. **The notion that salvation is by grace alone.** This view argues that man has no responsibility, but that God saves those who will be saved regardless of what they do. The proponents of the view, however, are divided into two groups. There are the universalists who reason that God loves all men and that therefore no one could possibly be lost. Then there are the old-time Calvinists who argue that God's grace is only extended to certain predestinated souls. The first view is wrong because the Bible plainly shows that many will be lost in torment. The second is wrong because the Bible plainly shows that God's grace is extended to all (Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2). The truth is that no one can be saved without God's grace, but neither are men saved by grace alone.

2. **The doctrine that salvation is by faith only.** The view that is usually held by faith only advocates is that one is saved from his sins at the instant he believes in his heart, before and without any additional response to God's commands. This misconception is directly opposite the plain statement of James 2:24 which declares that we are not justified by faith only.

3. **The delusion that morality is all that matters.** Many people feel that as long as one lives a fairly decent life, not participating in gross sin and being reasonably charitable, he is justified before God. This is a view that seems plausible to many because they see it as practical. This thinking, however, ignores the reality of sin and the need for a Saviour. If people could be saved by their own goodness, Christ died in vain. There is absolutely no salvation for any person (regardless of how morally good he is) except in Christ and through His plan. See Romans 3:23; John 14:6, 8:24, 3:5; Acts 4:12. A good moral man is as surely in need of a Saviour as is the worst criminal in the land.

4. **The illusion that one is saved by a religious affiliation.** This may not be commonly expressed, but it seems evident that some people think they are safe simply because they belong to a certain church, regardless of their obedience, or lack of obedience, to God's commands, and regardless of how they live. If questioned about their soul's condition they might reply, "I am a member of the ______ church." Such a view does not consider that salvation is personal, not corporate. God saves individuals, not organizations. It is true that all saved people are added to Christ's church (Acts 2:47) and that He is the Saviour of the body which is composed of such (Eph. 5:23), but it is a deadly mistake to think one is going to heaven simply because his name is on a church roll.

5. **The false security that claims "once saved always saved."** Few errors are more forcefully answered in the Bible (Luke 8:13; 1 Cor. 10:12; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; etc.). Yet a great many still think that having been once saved they always will be no matter how they live. Those who walk in the light, confessing their sins, continue to be cleansed by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7-10); but those who willfully choose to turn away from the Lord will fall from grace (Heb. 10:26-27; Gal. 5:4).

6. **The erroneous doctrine that baptism is not directly connected with conversion.**

Almost every denomination contradicts Bible teaching regarding baptism. Most say that one can have his sins forgiven, is born again, and becomes a Christian without being baptized. The New Testament, however, is clear. From Jesus' words to Nicodemus (John 3:5) to Peter's reminder (1 Pet. 3:21), every verse that mentions baptism and salvation (or any equivalent terms) **always shows that baptism comes first.** See Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; etc.

7. **The unscriptural practice of "praying through" at a "mourner's bench."** Many denominations give what they call an "altar call" which has people pray until they feel they have been saved. This may be a very emotional experience or it may be somewhat formal, depending upon the degree of sophistication of the group. Either way it is totally without scriptural sanction. Closely associated with this is the idea that one is saved through some mysterious experience, or by having simply "received Jesus in my heart." Never, however, do we find such things in the Bible. The apostles had a mandate from Christ and were miraculously guided by the Holy Spirit and they never taught or countenanced anything like this. Even when the penitent Saul of Tarsus was fasting and praying he was urged, "And why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.)

Salvation is always by grace through faith and can never be through the works of merit or invention of men (Eph. 2:8-9). Those who would be saved through Christ, therefore, must comply with His terms. Five requirements must be met by any person who wants to become a Christian. (1) He must come to **know** the truth of the gospel (John 8:32; Rom. 1:16). (2) He must sincerely **believe** it (Heb. 11:6). (3) He must **repent** of sin (Acts 17:30). (4) He must **confess** his faith in Christ as God's Son (Rom. 10:9-10). (5) And he must be **baptized** in the Lord's name for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). When one has complied with these requirements, God forgives him of his sins and adds him to Christ's church with the assurance that if he faithfully continues, he will have a home in heaven (Rev. 2:10). This is the only plan of salvation that works.

Forgetting and Pressing On

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but one thing, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before." (Phil. 3:13.)

Consider these words of the Holy Spirit and let us think about them for a moment. The Holy Spirit is referring to us as brethren, His brothers and sisters. He is using the apostle Paul to teach us a valuable lesson. Paul states that he has not apprehended this. To what was he referring? Let us look to verse 14 to see. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It is a lifelong process of our obedient faith in Christ.

Paul says we forget those things which are behind and we press forward toward the goal.

The Holy Spirit knows the importance of forgetting the past. He may have used Paul because of his early persecution of the church to bring the importance of this lesson to us.

Consider our ownselves for a while also. What lies behind us that may hinder our pressing on? How important is it to forget those things which are behind? How important is it for us to forget the mistakes of others? How often are our troubles today based on the past being brought up by ourselves or someone else? Can we truly forgive without forgetting? Does God forgive without forgetting (Heb. 8:12)? Shouldn't we as Christians remember the words of the Holy Spirit found in Colossians 3:3: "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God"? or do we too often become an act like the people described in 1 Peter 4:3-4. "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you."

Brethren, we should accept it from the world but should we accept it from the body, and what's more important from ourselves?

Some things are hard for us to forget, but we should be on guard not to let it interfere with our service to Christ. Let the past stay where it belongs. Let the present be as the Lord's will and the future as the Lord gives, and that according to His will (James 4:13-16). Brethren, all we have is today (Heb. 3:13-14).

And Such Were Some of You

Albert Gardner, Spartanburg, SC

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:9-11.)

Barnes gives three points on this passage that are worthy to notice. "This shows (1) exceeding grace of God, that could recover even such persons from sins so debasing and degrading. (2) It shows that we are not to despair of reclaiming the most abandoned and wretched men. (3) It is well for Christians to look back on what they once were."

The city of Corinth was riddled with idolatry and immorality which seemed to go hand in hand. J.W. McGarvey tells of the "temple of Venus, supporting a thousand priestesses dedicated to harlotry, so that even in that dark age Corinth had a bad name."

From among the people of such low morals certain ones heard gospel preaching and upon believing it, repented of their sins and were baptized into Christ. They were "called to be saints" (1 Cor. 1:2). By the gospel they were called out of darkness and

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brought into the church of God at Corinth. Some of them had been fornicators, homosexuals, thieves, drunkards, slanderers, and swindlers.

It is wonderful to know that the gospel is powerful enough to save people guilty of those sins. A person does not get so bad that the gospel could not save him. Paul said he was the chief of sinners but he was saved by grace, mercy, and faith. On the other hand, a person does not get so good that he does not need the gospel.

Paul says "and such were some of you." That is, some of them had been drunkards. You were. You are not now. You stopped drinking when you became a Christian. Some of them were homosexuals, but repentance took care of that and they stopped it. Then, they were washed in baptism and had their guilt removed. That sanctified and justified them.

Others were thieves but when they became Christians they stopped stealing. You **were** thieves, but not now. Some of them had been idolators. You were, but not now. Can you imagine these brethren continuing in idolatry after baptism? Some of them were fornicators or adulterers. Paul says you were, but not now. They stopped it. Baptism will remove the guilt of it only when one repents of his sins. That is the meaning of the phrase "and such were some of you."

Repentance is a change of mind about sin which results in a change of live. Baptism takes away the guilt of sin. One who is a drunkard who repents of drunkenness changes his mind about it. He reforms his life and stops it. Is he saved? Sometimes people take reformation of life to mean salvation. However, one must be baptized into the death of Christ where he reaches the saving blood of the Lamb.

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) Luke informs us that "many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized." (Acts 18:8.) There can be no doubt about their salvation for they did exactly what the Lord required.

About Those Versions

Bill Heinselman, Cary, NC

Reference is made to a previously published article concerning statements recently made by some Carolina congregations in their church bulletins to the effect that the elders requested that only the King James and the American Standard versions be used in public worship and Bible classes.

The above mentioned article claims the purpose was not to attack these versions and then proceeds to attack the King James Version. No one that I know, elder or preacher included, would defend the use of the term "Easter" in the KJV. All are agreed that this is an error. But it is a harmless error in comparison to some blunders, mistranslations and deletions characteristic of the New International (paraphrase) Version, which was recommended by the writer.

Would the above mentioned writer care to explain to a truth loving people why in the world the word "Christ" is left out of the NIV in such passages as the following: John 6:69; Acts 15:11, 16:31; Romans 1:16, 16:24; 1 Corinthians 5:4, 9:1; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 3:14; 1 Thessalonians 3:11; Hebrews 3:1; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:9? And the word "blood" is omitted from Colossians 1:14. Also in the NIV there is a statement found in Romans 1:17 which comes so close to teaching salvation by faith only that some condemn it on that basis. Is our brother really ready to label such a perversion of the sacred writings a "good to excellent" translation? Anyone who has

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read the "preface" of the NIV knows that it is mislabeled as a "version" anyway, it is admittedly a paraphrase — they strove for "more than a word-for-word translation"!

But, some questions are in order:

(1) Which bulletin suggested that the KJV or ASV are the only true translations? Was this merely an unwarranted assumption on the part of the writer in order to have a better basis upon which to condemn the statements?

(2) Which bulletin stated that true Christians would not use any other translations? Is this another uncalled-for assumption on the part of the writer?

(3) Does the writer of the above mentioned article have a complete understanding of the meaning of the word "repent"? One is caused to wonder about this since he stated that it is impossible for God to repent! (W.E. Vine in his **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words** says that it means to change one's mind or purpose.)

(4) Given the fact that the Bible teaches that elders are shepherds, overseers, guardians, etc., and in view of the fact that they "watch for our souls," (Heb. 13:17), are we to understand that elders do not have the **right** to announce to the congregation that only certain versions are to be used in public teaching? It is this writer's position that they not only have the **right** but the **responsibility** to do so!

(5) Where is the **evidence** that modern speech versions(?) of the Scriptures make the Bible read more often? The King James Version continues to be a best-seller!

Finally, I certainly do agree that preachers need to prepare a sermon on "good" and "bad" translations — and they need to speak the **truth** in **love** when they do so!

I Love You

Jack D. Anthony, Greenville, SC

It's hard to find something new to say,
When you write about love this day.
But isn't it nice when you are feeling blue
To have someone say, "I love you"?

They say that love will always find a way,
Other things fail, but love is here to stay.
And doesn't it make an old day new
To have someone say, "I Love you"?

There's always plenty of trouble and strife,
As we travel so hurriedly through this life.
But one thing that helps change a dim view
Is to have someone say, "I love you."

So as we travel down life's rocky road,
As we see others carrying a big load.
Do your best to help them pull through
By saying and meaning, "I love you."

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"Why Do They Grumble?"

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

Every year the Lord's body suffers the pain of loss as members turn away in unfaithfulness. Why? Many because they grumble! Why do Christians grumble in unbelief, leave the kingdom of God, and return to the world of that unbelief? The history of Israel is a lesson about man's faith in God. One of those stories finds her standing at the threshold of power and hope as a nation and she refuses to claim it! (Num. 13-14). As Israel stood at the Jordan River, just 40 days after she was delivered by God from shackles of bondage and hopelessness, she stood in unbelief. Two men of faith said they could have God's promised land to them and they were right. Ten men of unbelief said, "We can't do what God wants us to do" and they convinced the congregation of their unbelief! They began to grumble about it and they were **dead** wrong! Only the two men of faith, Joshua and Caleb, were able to live in that land 40 years later. Grumbling can kill!

We must understand that grumbling is a sin of unfaithfulness (Num. 14:1-4). Grumbling is the dissatisfaction with Christianity; we no longer have pleasure in God and His word, righteousness and truth, Christ and His church. A grumbling Christian does not trust God's leadership anymore! They do not believe that God is right in a given matter; so, they reject God's word for their own reasoning. They do not want to do what is right in that matter; so, they are an easy victim to the charms of this world's wickedness. Somehow, they get the notion that what is right is not good and so it is wrong. Therefore, the grumbling Christian makes the deadly decision to leave God.

Now, why do Christians grumble themselves into this unfaithfulness? There are many reasons offered. Some fall in love with sin and so whatever is right does not appeal to them as it once did. You might hear them say, "I don't think that way anymore." Some blame God for their difficulties and problems. This was Israel's grave mistake. However, God can do no evil thing (James 1:13) and we make our own choices in life (Rev. 20:11-12). Some are tired of obedience. Yet, no matter how tough it might get, God will renew our strength (Isa. 40:28-31). Some complain that the Christian life is too demanding. Yes, it is demanding but not too demanding. They will say, "God expects too much of me"; but, He does not. Any of us can do whatever God wants us to do (Phil. 4:11-13). Some blame their sin on the disobedience of others and say, "I will not do it because that person did not." It is not wise to use others to determine our destiny. Still, others grumble because they are spiritually bankrupt (James 4:8; Rev. 3:20). Spiritual roots dry up and so faith dies when the soul does not worship, study, pray, and fellowship with other Christian souls. Christianity no longer means anything to them. Why? They have cut themselves off from God whom they would serve and obey (John 15:5). Like a tree that is cut down from its roots, their faith dies and rots away! Faith, and therefore our Christian living, cannot survive without Christ who lives in us through our worship and knowledge of Him, our prayer to Him, and our fellowship in His church.

So grumbling ourselves into unfaithfulness is self-destructive! Israel wanted to return to Egypt! Can you imagine that? Though it was materially more appealing than the wilderness, it was a place of bondage — of slavery, indignity, and humiliation for them. God was leading them through a difficult time to bring them to a place of freedom — of life, dignity, and hope. It is like going to the market to buy eggs and you deliberately buy a carton of rotten ones. The smell is enough to make some folks sick and eating them will make anyone sick. For a Christian to turn away in unfaithfulness cheapens their life and soul and it will not be well with him or her. For an example of what God thinks of such people, see 1 Peter 2:20-22.

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Church Grows in Caracas

Caracas, Venezuela. Bob Brown, missionary with the church in Caracas, reports that there have been 43 baptisms in the city during the first quarter of 1986. Furthermore, the church has been enjoying record attendance on Sundays so far this year, with attendance averaging nearly 300.

"We Care" Approach Successful

Gadsden, Alabama. We Care Campaigns are conducted in connection with World Radio, a project under the oversight of the elders of the Whites Ferry Road church of Christ in West Monroe, Louisiana. The We Care approach to campaign work combines service with evangelism, often with surprising success, as the Christians in Gadsden would confirm. Last March Christians from six congregations cooperated in an area-wide campaign. During the weeks prior to and of the campaign, participants went to work serving their neighbors.

In reaching out to people in the area, one team provided groceries for a man whose house had burned. Another team found a lady sitting on her porch who said, ". . . I'm so lonely that I cannot stay in the house any longer." Immediately Christian women began visiting with the woman on a regular basis in order to provide companionship. Furniture was provided for people who had little or none. Utilities were paid, medicines were bought, and many other works of service performed.

The result was that 24 souls obeyed the gospel during the crusade week, with many others being expected to obey in the weeks following. The example of service was so great that it prompted one Baptist minister to say, "The church of Christ has changed its image here, all in the past three months."

Trend of Declining Growth Reversed

Abilene, Texas. Flavil Yeakley, director of the Church Growth Institute of Abilene Christian University, reports in a recent study that after 15 years of declining growth and four years of membership loss, U.S. churches of Christ are growing again.

According to Yeakley, "Membership statistics collected from more than 1,000 randomly selected congregations indicate the 1985 growth rate is 0.02 percent." That compares with a 0.49 percent decline in 1984. Yeakley went on to say, "While the growth is not significant, it does indicate a significant change in direction." The rate of decline was at its highest in 1983, when the rate was 1.01 percent. Growth stopped in 1981, with 1982 witnessing a net loss in total membership in U.S. churches. Through 1984 we continued to lose members, making the reversal of that trend in 1985 all the more significant and encouraging. The statistics do not reflect the growth and membership of churches of Christ outside the United States.

Philippine Church Ordains Elders

Baguio City, Philippines. Elders and deacons were recently appointed at the Baguio City church of Christ for the first time in its 34-year history. "Despite a revolution and hard economics, the Lord's

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church continues its advancement and maturity in many ways," said David Stathopulo, a missionary in Baguio City.

Fully developed churches with elders are rare in mission areas outside the United States. The 300-member Baguio City church supports its own evangelist, a weekly radio program, and a missionary in Tarlac province.

Editorial Book Views

Now I Can Fly, Jane McWhorter; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, Texas 79604; 179 pages, paper $5.25.

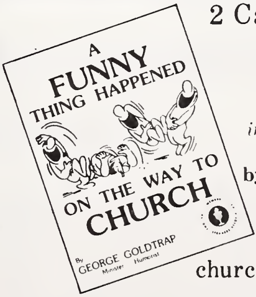
In this production, Jane McWhorter has added another very fine book to her growing list (her previous books are **She Hath Done What She Could, Caterpillars or Butterflies, Let This Cup Pass,** and **Meet My Friend David).** By observing the method by which young birds, just leaving their nests, are forced to fly if they are to survive, the author applies the principle to Christian growth. With the birds it is either fly or die; with the young Christian it is grow or perish (spiritually). She develops her theme in a marvelous way through 14 chapters, some of which are entitled: "The Flight Plan," "Rising Against the Wind," "Holding Patterns," and "Roots and Wings." While primarily designed for ladies and ladies classes, there is no question but that all can greatly profit from this book.

Growth Through Biblical Stewardship, J.J. Turner; Quality Publications; 137 pages, paper $3.95.

J.J. Turner has for years been turning out one good and useful book after another. We have learned to expect the best from him. This one is no exception to the high standard he has made for himself. It deals, in outline form, with many different aspects of man's stewardship under God. The author describes its contents and use as follows: "Counting the introduction and four appendixes this series contains thirty-one lessons. They are designed for: (1) teaching as a series, (2) preaching series, (3) classroom study, (4) personal study, and (5) home study groups. The lessons may be used in sequence or a random selection." Each of the chapters bristle with biblical information to instruct in and motivate to practice Christian stewardship, and each closes with a series of questions for discussion. A proper use of this book will help both churches and individuals grow in the grace of giving, a thing that most of us desperately need.

Porter-Myers Debate, W. Curtis Porter and B. Sunday Myers; Win-More Publications, P.O. Box 897, W. Jefferson, NC 28694; 240 pages, cloth $6.95.

A written discussion on the proposition, "Is the Church of Christ a Denomination? Or Is It the Exclusive New Testament Church?" Curtis Porter, one of the foremost debators who ever took the platform in defense of the truth, defends the Lord's church against the charge that it is just another human denomination. B. Sunday Myers (a member of the Church of



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God, headquartered in Cleveland, TN) undertakes an impossible task (and this is reflected in scores of places where he misapplies facts and contradicts the obvious, even himself) when he tries to attach denominationalism to the church of Christ. While written in 1949, it is very appropriate today, especially in view of the fact that now some brethren have conceded the battle and believe that it is not only a denomination but also that it is a big sick one (a concept we believe is deathly sick). Porter, as always, does an amazing job in clarifying the truth; Myers, on the other hand, seems to display only one talent and that is to muddy the water by juggling facts. In our judgment, this is a Porter classic, one that everyone who is interested in the current controversy on unity should read. It is a **must** for all debate lovers.

BACKFIRE

Letters to the Editor

Dear Howard:

Thanks for all you are doing to promote the gospel in the Carolinas. People like you make preaching in this part of the country a real pleasure. You are always optimistic and open-minded even when things look dark. I am sure **Carolina Christian** will make it through this crisis as it has so many in the past. Our folks bought the 12 **Commentaries on Romans** in two minutes. Please send me 24 more copies. — Jerry Senn, Hendersonville, NC

We must confess that at times things do look gloomy, but with friends like this, who could help but be optimistic? The Lord is still on His throne.

Dear brother Winters:

I would like to thank you for the wonderful love you have for us here in Africa. We just received two boxes of used clothing you sent. I am sure the people and needy Christians will have something to smile about, and since the cold is near they will be kept warm. There are so many people here in Africa in the villages and Zambia as a whole who almost have nothing — some are walking around without clothing, almost naked. We know and trust God will surely give to those in abundance who share with others. — Douglas Brittell Sibazia, Lusaka, Zambia.

The clothing went from the church in West Jefferson, NC. If others would like to share clothing with the people of Africa, send them to brother Sibazia at P.O. Box 36355, Lusaka, Zambia. Your gift will be twice blessed: it will bless both the giver and the receiver.

Dear brother Winters:

Thanks for keeping **Carolina Christian** coming. I have spent another winter in New Mexico and am now about ready to start back to West Virginia for my eleventh summer in mission work. In addition to the local work at Mount Alto, I conduct about a dozen meetings a year. Over the past 20 years we have helped start eight new congregations and seen them in new buildings

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and growing into well-established congregations, with preachers and a mission program of their own. In addition to this we have helped several small congregations that have grown in numbers and added on to their buildings, and three have added new buildings. The working agreement we have with the Sixteenth and Pile congregation here in Clovis, NM, is that if I will come home and work with it during the winter, I can go to West Virginia and do mission work during the summer. So we hope to be able to keep this up at least another five years or so. We still have some new congregations in the making. — Dennis L. Moss, Clovis, NM

By such efforts of good men, of whom the world is unworthy, the kingdom of God is spreading — the truth is mightily marching on.

Dear brother Winters:

I am usually in India at this time but on March 12 our house burned and my wife called me in New Delhi to come home. I arrived here on March 15 and we have been busy since then cleaning out, cleaning up, and trying to rebuild. It is a real mess but we are thankful that no one was hurt. Please pray for us through these most difficult times. . . . As far as I know, none of your manuscripts were destroyed in the fire. — J.C. Choate, Winona, MS

Undoubtedly brother Choate has done more for foreign mission work than any man among us. He and his family have spent much time on foreign soil (mainly in India), he is the prime source of encouragement to others, both to go and to stay, and (perhaps his greatest contribution) he has developed a vast literature ministry, primarily aimed at the mission field. He is one man who is making a difference in the world in which we live. The manuscripts he spoke of are books we have contributed to his work, some of which are soon to be published.

Contributors

Each contributor of $25 or more (to help us publish 1 Corinthians and ultimately to get the paper on a self-sustaining basis) will be listed in the paper and will receive a free autographed copy of **Commentary on First Corinthians** as soon as it comes from the press. We hope many of you will want to join this number.

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News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, S.C.

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, S.C. 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Selma. Jackson English will preach in a gospel meeting July 13-18.

Elizabeth City. The Bayside congregation has an opening for a full-time minister. Contact Tex Pettigrew (919 — 771-5711) or Ricky Wilkerson (919 — 426-8493).

Cary. We have had five baptisms and five families to place membership with us recently. The annual youth rally was a high success. Clarence DeLoach of Cookeville, Tennessee, will conduct our fall meeting beginning the last Sunday in September.

Hendersonville. Wayne Scott is working as youth minister again this summer.

Asheville. Paul Kirkpatrick is now preaching for the East Chestnut church.

Salisbury. A group of workers from East Tennessee School of Preaching conducted a door-to-door campaign which resulted in 38 home studies while they were there and 22 continuing home studies after they went back to Knoxville.

Hickory. Barry Elliott has resigned his work to move to Clanton, Alabama.

Raleigh. Greg Smith has been named to serve as youth minister.

N.C. Conversions:

Westside, Charlotte, 5; Mooresville, 2; Taylorsville, 1; Advance, 1; Cary, 5; Providence Road, Charlotte, 2; Wilmington, 1; Gastonia, 1; Pine Valley, Wilmington, 1; Brooks Avenue, Raleigh, 2; Archdale, Charlotte, 4. Total: 25.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Myrtle Beach. Malcom Hill is scheduled for a gospel meeting June 22-26. The theme will be "What Is the Truth?"

Rock Hill. Tim Senn will serve as youth minister for the summer.

North Charleston. Al Simmons, recent graduate of East Tennessee School of Preaching, will be working for the Charleston area congregations on the various college campuses. Al and Ann will live at 78 Ashley Oaks, Apt. D-41, Charleston, SC 29407 (803 — 571-3763).

Lexington. Several weeks ago, our elders announced that a special contribution would be set for May 4 to boost our building fund. The goal was set at $7,000.00. Allan Whitacre apologized for the elders' lack of faith Sunday morning as he announced that the final figure was in excess of $20,000.00. We all smiled as he made that announcement. A knowing smile. An understanding smile. We appreciated the elders' feelings of joy and humility in the presence of God's power. We too were genuinely surprised at that generous outpouring of monetary gifts. We too needed to apologize to the elders. To each other. Most of all, to God.

S.C. Conversions:

Fairview, Spartanburg, 3; Greenwood, 7; North Charleston, 2; Bypass, Union, 2; Summerville, 7; Central, Spartanburg, 4; Northeast, Taylors, 9; S. Pinckney St., Union, 10; Mannington, 6; Lexington, 1; Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, 1. Total: 52.

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THE LOVE OF GOD

John 3:16

Its Extent: "For God *SO* loved . . ."	***What greater love?***
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Its Purpose: "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."	***What higher honor?***

Jeff Lovitt

editorial

Henry Fuhry

Word has been received that Henry Fuhry is dead. He died during the latter part of May. At the time of this writing we have no further details. We are extremely saddened by this news. As all readers of **Carolina Christian** know, he was one of the best friends this paper ever had. He supported it in every conceivable way. He long ago so established himself as a solid and reliable writer that we tried to use at least one of his articles in every issue (we did not always succeed in this because we would take too much material to the printers and some of it would have to be pulled out; on a number of occasions it was his). At the time of his death he left in our hands a rather large backlog of articles that will continue to appear for many months to come. But he not only wrote for the paper, he also supported it by financial gifts, by purchasing and distributing the books we publish, by sending in subscriptions (gift and otherwise), by ideas to make the paper better and more successful, and by many words of encouragement (hardly a month passed that there was not a letter to the editor from him, holding up our hands in this work). Words are inadequate to describe what he has meant to us over the years. No work can be done without friends, and few works have ever been attempted that had a better friend than Henry Fuhry was to **Carolina Christian.** Thus we suffer an irreplaceable loss in his passing, but he leaves behind him a great legacy and we pray that his example will inspire many others to take up the torch that was dropped by his faithful hands and carry on the work that he was doing. If so, **Carolina Christian** will survive and thrive; if not, the road ahead of us is going to be rough and rocky.

We have requested that someone in the area where he lived, who knew him best, write a tribute to him. If they do, we will feature him and his work in a future issue.

HAVE WE FORGOTTEN?

During the early days of the Restoration Movement we were in a constant battle with all forms of religious error. Unscriptural doctrines and practices were confronted on every hand, in personal confrontations, from the pulpit, in the press, and in public debate. But it appears that we are now changing our approach — we have become so tactful that we are failing to teach. Or the problem may be that we have lost faith in our cause, that we no longer see the creeds and systems of men as a great evil, a departure from the divine truth of God.

As most of our readers know, there has been for some time now an effort by many in the brotherhood to bring about unity between the churches of Christ and the conservative Christian churches. The concept of this movement and the desire to work for unity are commendable and should be supported as long as it is done Scripturally. But our observation has convinced us that the great majority of our brethren who are involved in this have either forgotten or else never knew the vast evil involved in departure, false teaching, and apostasy, which

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always find their roots in a disrespect for the authority of the perfect and complete word. As we see it, the only way to unity is for all to return to the Bible. And one of the ways to convince men of the necessity of returning to the Bible in all matters of faith and practice is to confront them with and convince them of the dreadful results of all departures from the divine pattern. To see evil as good, or to compromise with its forces, is not a virtue in anyone, especially in a child of the true and living God.

The vision to see the evils of division and denominationalism evidently characterized the early leaders of the Restoration Movement far more than it does those of us who are supposedly heirs of their plea. We have a tendency to see the virtues of the people in denominationalism rather than to see the faults (the unscripturalness) of the system which has deceived them. But if we are to ever restore pure New Testament Christianity we are going to have to see apostasy as apostasy and treat it for what it is. We need to see the dangers of religious error as acutely as did our forefathers in the faith. We will then be willing to buckle on the armor of truth and meet the enemy on the battlefield rather than to eat with them at a common table of brotherhood.

As an example of how the leaders of the Restoration Movement faced this problem, we will quote a single paragraph from the pen of Moses E. Lard, a powerful proponent of the plea to restore the ancient order of things. After showing how sects originate in the church and then go on to form separate bodies, he says:

"Let this offstanding body now go on increasing in size, collecting members from every available source, until its proportions have become so vast as to cover whole districts of country, and even to pervade whole kingdoms. Now appoint to this body a head, an ecclesiastic and civil head, one who claims the power, **jure divino,** to govern kings, and to alter at will 'laws' in the church of Christ, and we have 'the Man of Sin,' the Papacy, or great apostasy foretold in the Bible. Let factions now arise in this body and ultimately separate from it. In these again let other factions arise and finally separate from them. In other words, let us have apostasies from the apostasy, and apostasies from these again, without any complete return to the church of Christ, and we have the various parties now in Christendom complacently styling themselves 'Christian sects,' such as Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc. These parties were not originally apostasies from the church of Christ, but apostasies from the Papacy or from other apostasies therefrom, and constitute the harlot daughters of old Mother Rome. Their harlotry consists in this, that they carry on an illicit intercourse with the world in the institution of infant sprinkling, and thereby introduce into the so-called church a breed of bastard children, born after the flesh and not after the Spirit. That these parties are better than the parent stock in most respects is gladly granted; but that they still fall far short of the church of Christ is certain. But of all the perversions of language known to me, none is greater than to call these parties Christian sects. They are sects in no sense of the word save a false sense, but apostasies in a double sense. They are apostasies both from Rome and from Christ. In that we praise them, in this condemn them. It is hence an abuse of the word to call them sects, and a prostitution of the name of Christ to call them Christian. To call them Christian sects makes them appear not merely harmless things, but most attractive. Had they been branded as God has branded them, with the deeply opprobrious epithet of harlot daughters of Rome or apostasies, the world would never have been gulled by them as it has been." (Lard's Quarterly, Vol. 1, for the year 1863-1864, pp. 249-250.)

That is strong language indeed! But is it

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stronger than is deserving for those who have apostasized from the truth, those who follow human rather than divine laws? Does not the very fact that we see it as strong language indicate that we have either grown soft or else we have forgotten the evils of apostasy?

AMNON HAD A FRIEND

Amnon was the son of David, the king of Israel. Absalom was also David's son (by another wife). Absalom had a sister named Tamar. In the course of time Amnon fell passionately in love with Tamar, so much so that the divine record says that he fell sick for her. But he could not come up with a scheme whereby he could entice her to immorality with him. He was therefore at a loss as to what to do. But at this point (2 Sam. 13:3) the Bible tells us that Amnon had a friend by the name of Jonadad. This friend convinced Amnon that because he was the king's son no limitations should be placed on his desires. He therefore introduced to Amnon a plan whereby he could deceive his half-sister and thus force himself upon her (read 2 Sam. 13:4, 5). Amnon followed Jonadad's advice, enticed Tamar into his private chamber, and raped her. He thus destroyed her purity and committed the crime that ultimately led to his own death (2 Sam. 13:6-36). And all this was done because he had a friend.

Now do not get us wrong. To have the right kind of friend is a wonderful blessing, a thing to be sought, desired, and cherished. The wise man said, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." (Prov. 18:24.) But Amnon's friend was not the right kind of a friend. He was the kind who would lead his friend into a crime that would destroy the purity of a young virgin and cost him his life. Everyone needs a friend, but he needs the kind who will help him, not destroy him.

For this reason it is vital that we choose our friends with care. They may bless us or they may be a curse to us, depending on what kind of friends they are. We have personally known of those who chose the right kind of friends and their lives were blessed beyond measure by them. They were helped and encouraged to do right, to live better lives, to try to reach their full potential, and to be more faithful in the Lord's service. But we have also known others who chose friends like Jonadad and were led into wrong attitudes and actions by them. Led by their friends, they began going to the wrong places, associating with the wrong people, thinking the wrong thoughts, and doing the wrong things. Their friends led them downward, deeper and deeper into sin and degradation. They soon found themselves in all kinds of trouble . . . and all because they made the wrong choice in friends.

In developing friends, we should take seriously Paul's words to the Corinthians: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." (1 Cor. 15:33.) The NIV makes this even more emphatic: "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.' "

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Becoming Authentic

Jim Gardner, Knoxville, TN

Jesus was not impressed with discussions of who is greatest. Greatness is ordinarily determined by position. The person who has the most influence wins out. Jesus saw such analyses of greatness as a sham, because thereby self-interest is served rather than helpfulness to others. On one occasion the disciples fell into a heated discussion. Jesus wanted to know what it was all about. They were embarrassed and said nothing. They already sensed that Jesus was not impressed by human measures of greatness. Jesus called the twelve and said to them, "If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant to all." He then led a child to the middle of the disciples. Taking the child up in His arms He said, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me." (Mark 9:37.) God is not interested in pretensions to greatness and power. He is interested in the one who is willing to turn aside and help the most insignificant human being, even a child. One becomes real in the eyes of God by serving even the most inconsequential.

The real disciples of the Lord turn their backs on striving for position. From the standpoint of Jesus those who count only high and mighty activities worthy of their time are inauthentic. The real persons serve, regardless of how insignificant or paltry the deed may seem. "For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name Christ, will by no means lose his reward." (Mark 9:41.)

Authentic persons by Jesus' standards were those with single-hearted devotion to God. Jesus minced no words in reacting to the aspirations of James and John for positions of power. "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave to all." (Mark 10:42-44.)

Jesus searches for those available to serve, to help the needy, however insignificant. This was His own life. He showed the way. He was noted for putting His life where His mouth was. He invites us to shed our phoniness and become authentic. We do this by surrendering to Him. If we try, He will supply the power!

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Here's The Answer

To Questions You've Asked

Howard Winters

Henry Fuhry, a great friend of **Carolina Christian,** submitted the following request: "I am studying your **Commentary on Romans** with diligence. It is outstanding. Your comments on Romans 13 on 'Civil Authorities' are superior, so easy to understand, and clear. Sometime I hope that you will give us your thinking on the subject of 'Capital Punishment,' and whether a Christian has a right to participate in condemning another to such end through actions of a civil jury."

As far as we recall we have never written on capital punishment (though we have mentioned it and spoken often on the subject) and that for two primary reasons; (1) we have aimed at the more difficult aspect of the subject, namely, the war question, because even the pacifists usually believe in it (in fact, they are often its strongest proponents). (2) We believe that while God permits it (when justly administered by the proper authorities) He does not bind it absolutely under the Christian system. That is, God has authorized civil governments to deal with its criminals in a way that meets the demands of justice. If it chooses, it may administer capital punishment for capital crimes. But if it can serve the cause of justice by some other means, it is free to do so. Thus it is my judgment (poor though it may be) that in a wealthy nation such as ours, with a rather secure prison system, there is, in most cases, a better way to administer justice than the death penalty. Would not life in prison serve the same basic end? When we look at the Old Testament, where capital punishment was freely practiced with the approval of God, the absence of an adequate prison system is apparent. True, there were some prisons of a sort but they were not adequate to meet the needs as are the prisons in our country. We believe this accounts for the large number of capital offenses under the law (see number 6 below). Thus we find ourselves in the unusual position of defending the right of the state to practice capital punishment while opposing it (in most cases) on the grounds that we are capable of providing an acceptable substitute. Since the later aspect is a personal view, we leave it here and proceed to show that the Scriptures authorize capital punishment and consequently authorized the means resulting in it, such as the police force, the court system (including the jury), the prison system, and the carrying out of the court's orders in actual execution. And we contend that if they are authorized by God to be done they can no more be wrong for a Christian than for anyone else.

We will deal with the request by stating and discussing some Biblical principles, some bearing directly on the case and some indirectly.

1. Life is precious and should be highly respected by all. We should work to save it when and where possible, not to destroy it. We would even apply this principle to animals and other lower forms of life. We do not believe the kind of character God wants us to be is displayed in taking any life uselessly or just for the fun of it. But our respect for lower life should not be such that we will not slaughter for food and for the health and survival of man. There should always be a justifiable purpose in taking life. We should have an even higher regard for human life. Man is made in God's image (Gen. 1:26-28) and life is a gift from Him. Thus no life should ever be taken out of disrespect for that life of for an unjust cause. But this high regard for human life must not blind us to the fact that occasionally a life must be taken in order to preserve life, law, and a peaceful society. It thus may become necessary to take a life to protect other lives and to maintain the honor of law. But when this is done, it must not be done out of disrespect for life itself but to administer justice. And we must not let our sympathies, though tender they may be for the criminal outweigh our sympathies for the victim —

we must not let respect for life annul the force of law and thus prevent justice. Respect for life and justice before the law must be balanced.

2. Where there is law there must be penalty. Without penalty law loses its force. It is never pleasant to administer the penalty (especially if the guilty is genuinely penitent), but the penalty must be exacted or the law is destroyed. When God authorizes civil government (and there can be no government without laws), He authorizes it to make and enforce laws. But there cannot be law without penalty. Thus God authorizes civil authorities to administer civil penalties. And the determination of those penalties is left in the hands of the civil authorities (so long as they are just and justly administered). We conclude therefore that a civil government is authorized to make laws and define some crimes as capital. When such laws are violated, the administering of the penalty, though capital in nature, is authorized by God.

3. To be just a law must fit the penalty to the crime. The penalty of some laws are not severe enough (e.g. driving while intoxicated); the penalty of others may be too severe (e.g. laws which treat a child as an adult). But justice demands that the penalty be equal in nature with the crime. A law that would put a child to death for pilfering would be unjust; a law that prescribed only a small fine for murder would be more unjust still. Pilfering should be punished. So should murder. But the punishment should be in keeping with the crime. God authorized civil governments to make and enforce laws but only when they are just and justly administered.

4. To take human life, which is a very serious thing, is not wrong **per se.** This the pacifist cannot concede. But nonetheless it is true. If the government is authorized to practice capital punishment, and the punishment is being justly administered, the act of taking the criminal's life (when lawfully carried out) is not wrong. If the act is not wrong, then it cannot be wrong for a Christian to participate in carrying it out, either by being the arresting officer, the jailor, the attorney, the judge, on the jury, or the one who actually administers the final act. Of course one could be wrong by having the wrong attitude, such as disrespecting human life, doing it out of hate or vengeance, or having the desire to rid the world of some scum. But these are personal sins. The act of execution (the taking of the criminal's life) is not wrong **per se.** In fact, it is right when it meets all the demands of justice.

5. God Himself has stated that one who sheds man's blood (that is, sheds innocent blood maliciously) his blood should also be shed by man (Gen. 9:6). This strongly implies that when one takes another's life (by murder) he forfeits his own right to live. As already stated, we do not believe that this means that, in the Christian age, civil authorities are bound to put every murderer to death. But it most certainly does mean (if the principle is still true) it has the right (and perhaps in some cases the obligation) to do so. If a murderer is permitted to live, it is by grace and not by right. And any substitute penalty that is inflicted must take into account the fact that by right his life is no longer his own. We believe that life in prison, providing that life can be used to benefit others rather than the criminal, can meet all the demands of justice under our system (but perhaps not under others). (We are considering only the cold-blooded murderer here, not those in which there are extenuating circumstances that would lessen the crime and thus change the nature of the penalty.)

6. The law of Moses (which was God's law under the Old Testament system) prescribed capital punishment for many violations, such as murder (Num. 35:16-21), adultery (Lev. 20:10), incest (Lev. 20:11-12), homosexuality (Lev. 20:13), witchcraft (Ex. 22:18), offering human sacrifice (Lev. 20:2-5), rebellion against parents (Deut. 21:18-21), breaking the Sabbath (Ex. 35:2), and numerous other offenses. The law of Moses was both a religious and a civil law. Both functioning as one. As far as we can ascertain, the only thing that has been changed in regards to this subject is that in the Christian age God has separated the religious from the civil. The religious now pertains to the church and the civil to the government. It is thus the function of civil authority (not the church) to make and execute laws pertaining to crime and punish-

ment. When those laws are just and justly administered they have God's approval.

7. Jesus recognized the right of capital punishment when the woman taken in adultery was brought to him (John 8:3-12). The scribes and Pharisees brought the woman to Him saying, "Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned." However, they were not seeking justice. They were tempting Jesus. Thus they asked Him, "What sayest thou?" Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground. They persisted in their quest. Jesus then said, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." They were all convicted and left the scene one by one. Only Jesus and the woman were left. Jesus asked, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" She replied, "No man, Lord." Jesus then said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way and sin no more." Jesus did not argue that such an act would be wrong or that the law was wrong in prescribing the act, but, since the scribes and Pharisees were trying to trap Him rather than to justly administer justice, He used the incident to convict all of their sins. Thus He recognized the right of capital punishment, but prevented it from being carried out because of their insincerity.

8. Paul acknowledged it as a right of the government (when justly administered) when Festus asked him if he would be willing to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there. He said, "For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar." (Acts 25:11.) Note that Paul indirectly admits that there are some crimes worthy of death. But since he was not guilty of such, he would appeal his case. If inspiration has said that some are worthy of death and God has appointed the civil government to carry out the just penalty of crime, who can doubt that capital punishment is a right granted by God?

9. Paul states (Romans 13) that the purpose of government is two-fold: (1) to protect the innocent; (2) to punish the guilty. No government can be true to its God ordained purpose which distorts or abuses either purpose. But to protect the innocent from the guilty, there must be laws. And when there is a law there is penalty for its violation. And some crimes against the innocent are so savage, so outrageous, that nothing short of the death penalty (or taking away the criminal's right to his own life) can be conceived as justice. When the penalty is not equal to the crime, justice is outraged. (For more on Romans 13, see our **Commentary on Romans.**)

For these and other reasons we believe that a government is within its rights to practice capital punishment when it is justly administered. And since a police force, a court, and a jury are necessary phases of justly administering the law, it follows with all the force that reason can have that a police force, a court, and a jury are right — that is, they are in keeping with the will of God. And if they are right, it simply cannot be wrong for a Christian to be a part of them. How could it be wrong for a Christian to do right? So we conclude that a Christian may (if he chooses) serve as a policeman, a judge, a prosecuting attorney, or on a jury in capital crimes, providing he has the proper respect for human life and that his motive is justice rather than vengeance.

Contributors

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The Ruin of Kings and Christians

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, S.C.

"The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe," (Prov. 29:25.)

"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John 12:42-43.)

The account of Saul's reign over Israel is one of the great tragedies of history. In the chronicle of his life, this large man and mighty warrior is described with a particular pattern of behavior, a fatal flaw: the crown meant too much to him.

At his coronation, Saul first evidenced this attitude. Though anointed by God, he was yet found hiding from the multitude (1 Sam. 10:21-22). Though seen as modesty, this attitude quickly degenerated into lust for the people's admiration. Saul was too greatly impressed with what others thought of him though at first there was no ambition.

Early success proved to be a curse. Though he was chosen for success, and success was no doubt what he wanted for Israel, yet its achievement "went to his head," and he became useless for the Lord's work.

For instance, as Samuel delayed a particular sacrifice, Saul saw the people scattering and took it upon himself to play the role of priest (1 Sam. 13:8-9). Thus is the flaw seen clearly. Rallying the people around him is more important to Saul than worshiping God properly.

As Saul was enjoying a victory against the Philistines which began by the faith of his son Jonathan, he placed all the army under a useless fast that he might exercise his power (1 Sam. 14). Jonathan without knowledge of the curse ate a little honey to strengthen himself in the battle. Afterwards, the people killed the spoil and ate it with the blood because they were so hungry. When the king later attempted to inquire of the Lord, He would not answer him. Saul investigated, saying, "Though it [the sin] be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." (1 Sam. 14:39). The lots were cast and Jonathan was taken. But the people protested the death sentence and Saul acquiesced, though he had sworn by the Lord.

Finally, the Lord sends Saul on a specific mission: annihilate the Amalekites. But the army of Israel wanted the best animals of the spoil spared for worship, and Saul wanted King Agag kept alive to parade in Israel as kings are prone to do. Unfortunately, all the protocol and noble intentions one may muster cannot hide rebellion toward the Lord. Now is the heart of Saul crystal clear in motive. It is the people, not the Lord, who is Saul's god (1 Sam. 15).

The rest of Saul's life is simply anticlimactic to the point. Saul perceives David's rivalry to his own proposed dynasty (1 Sam. 20:30-31) and therefore attempts his assassination which results in eventual civil war. Yet Saul **knew** David's appointment to the throne was from God (1 Sam. 15:28; 25:20). At last, after seeking help from one who was outlawed by him — the witch of Endor — he completes the course he set for himself. He dies by his own hand because he is afraid of the people, this time the Philistine army. He dies an apostate by even his own definition (for he had been violent against witches, 1 Sam. 28:3) and his corpse lies on a field of lost battle. All noble aims which he might have claimed as the Lord's anointed are now totally dissolved. Poor, poor Saul! Made king because of the people's contempt for the Lord, destroyed by the people's admiration for him.

But this disease does not cease with Saul. Undue consideration of men is truly the leaven of Herod of which Jesus Christ warned in Mark 8:15. Herod himself demonstrates this poison by honoring a vow which he had no business either making or fulfilling. But the room is filled with nobility, important people, people who can help or hinder a career. So the truly great John the Baptist must die at the word of a young girl and her wicked, grudge-carrying mother (Mark 6:17-29).

Pilate also fell victim. Although he knew that Jesus was innocent and that the chief priests had Him on trial because they were envious of Christ, yet he was willing to gratify the crown (Mark 15:9-15). The Son of God was slain like a criminal by his order.

This disease does not only affect politicians. Ananias and Sapphira desired to be like Barnabas before their brethren but without the sacrifice (Acts 4:34-5:11). The apostles' admiration became the couple's motivation and then their god. They died before the Lord and the whole church. Nor were apostles immune (Gal. 2:12).

Now we come to us. How many church problems are politically motivated? How many preachers and teachers and elders have fallen into the trap and path of the lamented King Saul and have thus wrought havoc in spiritual Israel? Beloved brethren, the plaudits of people mean nothing. The praise which is from God Almighty is everything. May He be our motivation from a pure heart. May He be given all the glory. And may our God keep us from the leaven of Herod. Surely there have been enough tragedies.

Thoughts to Ponder

SUFFERING LOVE

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

John says that "We love, because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19.) No one therefore can properly consider the love of God without being drawn closer to the heavenly Father. This is what Paul means when he speaks of the power of the cross. Love, in and of itself is great; but when love suffers for another, its potency knows no bounds. Someone is ready to ask, "Why would such a being as the Mighty God-man allow Himself to be put to death by a handful of people who hated Him?" The inspired record contains the answer to this question (Matt. 26: 47-54). Why then did Jesus allow Himself to be put to death? It was to accomplish the purpose of God's love in redeeming the world! What good would it have been for Him to destroy those who wanted to put Him to death?

A story is told of a problem boy and his dearly-loved pet, a little rough-haired dog. This boy's parents wanted him to be a good boy, but it seemed that nothing they said or did for him influenced him in that direction. He was kept in at school, made to stay in his bedroom, denied spending money, withholding certain privileges, and finally given corporal punishment. All this was meant to soften him, but he became more hardened in his disobedience. Then one summer afternoon an interesting thing happened. The boy was trying to teach his pet to do a certain trick. It was very hot, the little dog was tired, and the boy was impatient. When the little dog failed to understand what his master wanted him to do, the boy kicked his little pet in the mouth and made it bleed. The little dog was puzzled and bewildered as he looked up at the boy with his big brown eyes; and then very painfully, because the boy had also hurt his shoulder, the little dog struggled onto his hind legs and put up its paws, trying so hard to learn the trick which his master was trying to teach him. When the boy came near enough to him, the little dog put out his blood-stained tongue and tried to lick his master's hand. It was then that the boy broke down, and, blinded by tears, he ran to his mother, sobbing as if his heart would break. When she asked him what the trouble was he cried, "I have done an awful thing! I have done an awful thing!" No kind of punishment which he had received had ever affected him in that way, but suffering love on the part of his little dog had brought him to his senses.

The above story depicts merely the suffering love of a little dog. Today we must be concerned with the suffering love of God; not only for those who look up to Him, but also for His enemies. No one can look at the cross of Christ and contemplate its meaning without being profoundly affected. Many people may not respond to His glorious love now, but they will eventually come to acknowledge it. Philippians 2:5-11 reads, "Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but empied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man. And being found in human form He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exhalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth." Everyone will someday learn the truth which Gamaliel expressed in the long ago, namely, "No man can fight against God and hope to win" (see Acts 5:39).

I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me, a sinner, condemned, unclean.
For me it was in the garden He prayed, "Not my will, but Thine,"
He had no tears for His own griefs, but sweat-drops of blood for mine.
He took my sins and my sorrows, He made them His very Own;
He bore the burden to Calvary, and suffered, and died alone.
Twill be my joy thro' the ages to sing of His love for me.
How marvelous! How wonderful! And my song shall ever be:
How marvelous! How wonderful! Is my Savior's love for me!

Silent Ambassadors

Rick Parks, Lexington, SC

Why do many of God's ambassadors appear to be mute? Here is a question that weighs heavily on the minds of many evangelists and elders who have devoted their lives to "equipping the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:12). The answers given to this question are myriad, but generally share the same focal point: complacency is ruling Christians when it comes to the matter of evangelistic ardor. Undoubtedly, complacency is one explanation for the silence of God's "ministers of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18).

Perhaps there is more, though. Saints who are not equipped properly cannot minister effectively. There is good reason to believe that many Christians are not sharing the message of reconciliation because they have not been equipped to share such a message.

There is one question that needs desperately to be addressed: Is our message the same as the one that had an incredible impact in the first century (even in the absence of our sophisticated evangelistic tools)?

Evidently, Christ was the center of all teaching (public and private) in the first century church. More than that, His personal and revolutionary effect on lives was prominent in those discussions. Paul was not ashamed to recount his conversion experience for others. Much of his preaching was indeed a personal testimonial (Acts 22:1-21; 26:4-23).

Here's the point. Our message is not a neatly organized set of doctrinal tenets. The message of reconciliation becomes meaningful and powerful when we, like Paul, speak freely to others of the blessedness of having Christ in our lives.

Our tendency is to prepare for questions about baptism, instrumental music, worship, church organization, sectarian names, etc. Such preparation leads us automatically to steer religious discussions toward these topics, with little or no sensitivity to the individual needs of our hearer. Our message becomes nothing more than a parody of the teaching done by the apostles and Christians of the first century. What happens when someone asks, "What is the power of God doing for you?" Or, "How has your life changed since you gave your heart to Jesus?" I have found these to be the questions that really burn in people's minds. An eternal tragedy can occur when we realize in their presence that we are not prepared to answer those questions!

"What a hollow ring there is to evangelism when it does not overflow from the Christ-filled heart. Then it degenerates into proselytism — an arguing of individuals into a position or a party line, or a recruiting of them into an organization, rather than an introducing of people to a Person." — Leighton Ford

Courage to Do Right

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

It was 1848. Nothing stood between Vice President George Dallas and the Democratic Presidential nomination. James Polk would not seek reelection. But the Vice President threw it away! Or did he?

It was a split vote in the Senate over a tariff bill and he would break that tie. He knew that if he voted according to administration policy he would lose the support needed to win the party's nomination. Yet, George Dallas voted the way he believed was right; he voted according to the administration's policy.

Mr. Dallas had only three votes at the party's national convention. Even his own state turned against him. It was so violent that the Senate sergeant at arms was dispatched to Philadelphia to rescue his family. One moment standing on the threshold of his career and the next moment his career is dead. George Dallas was not to be heard from again but his name is not forgotten; for in 1849, a small community in Texas took it to be their own. This story speaks to us about courage.

You cannot make a decision that has no consequences. You find that sin has its troubles and righteousness has its rewards. You may also find that to do right, what you believe to be right, is sometimes costly.

Why? Because anything good has value. The greater the value the greater the cost. Right is the most demanding life, for it is the most excellent life. So, it is worth more and you should expect it to cost more.

Therefore, be tough enough to live right! Be tough enough to expect and accept whatever the cost may be. A selfish person nurtures wounds of self-pity and discredits himself. A selfish person is of weak character and follows the path of least resistance. The mighty oak tree stands in resistance to the wind while the clouds are carried away in its paths. Be a mighty oak tree!

In 1 Peter 4:12-19, God encourages you to stand up in your faith no matter the consequences. You **can** glorify His name in any situation or circumstance, with any decision or choice you make. Hear these good words from God:

1. Glorify God with expectation (12). The faithful Christian builds their life on the reverence and righteousness the world rejects. The conflict is natural and right.

2. Glorify God with joy (13-14). Have a positive attitude toward the sacrifices as an opportunity to choose God and not the world.

3. Glorify God with dignity (15-18). These sacrifices give an opportunity to exalt God's name before the world and so there is **no** shame. The shame is in the failure to exalt God's holy name.

4. Glorify God with commitment (19). Give Him your whole life and the sacrifices will follow.

It is easy to follow the crowd for it requires little character or spirit. However, at times it is a difficult challenge to hold to your convictions; that requires character, will, and courage.

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Christianity: Genuine Versus Fraudulent

Johnny Melton, Statesville, NC

"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:21-23.)

Here we have some of the saddest language of the Bible. Jesus has been contrasting genuine Christianity with the fraudulent variety. He has talked of two ways (the broad and the narrow); two gates (the wide and the strait); two destinies (destruction and life). He has warned of false prophets and given instructions on how to identify them; and now our Lord turns His attention on those who practice an unacceptable substitute for real Christianity.

There are many in the religious world who profess to be following Jesus, who do many good things in the name of religion, who give credit for their accomplishments to Jesus, who, nonetheless, are not Christians, are not bringing honor to Christ, and who are not saved.

I am well aware of the fact that it is unpopular to suggest that anyone in religion is wrong. We are encouraged to live and let live. We are told that it really does not matter what we do, so long as we do it in the name of Jesus. However, I want to insist that such an attitude cannot be supported by Scripture and, as a matter of fact, is refuted by the words of Jesus cited above.

Please notice that the people Jesus is considering are folks who believe in Him. They call Him, "Lord, Lord." Furthermore, they are religious people. The scene described in verse 22 takes us to Judgment Day. Jesus says, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" The idea of prophesying involves preaching. These folks were preaching about Jesus. "And in thy name cast out devils?" It is easy to turn on the radio or TV and hear folks claiming to cast out devils in Jesus' name even today. Just because the claim is made does not make it so. "And in thy name done many wonderful works?" All across this land of ours and around the world for that matter, the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, the oppressed are relieved and the downtrodden are uplifted by well-meaning folks, all in the name of Jesus — but to no avail. Notice that Jesus did not deny the fact of the religious acts that had been performed, many of which, under different circumstances, would have been well pleasing to Him. Please pay attention to His response: "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Mark it. Christianity involves more than mere profession of faith. And it also involves more than works of religious devotion. In order for our faith and our acts of religious devotion to be acceptable to Jesus we must be obedient to Him.

It does not matter how fast we may be able to run; unless we enter the race and run on the prescribed course, we cannot win the prize. Comparing the Christian life to a race, the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:24, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." In 2 Timothy 2:5, Paul said, "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."

There are many good people in our world today attempting to run the Christian race, who are striving for masteries, but who are doing so unlawfully. They have been led to believe that they are on the proper racetrack and that they are eligible to compete, but Jesus is going to say to them, "I never knew you."

In order to be known of Jesus one must "do the will of [his] father which is in heaven." Calling on His name is not enough. One must in faith repent of sin. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "I tell you nay, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Believing in Jesus, one must confess his faith. Romans 10:10 says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Having confessed Jesus as Lord, one is to be baptized, in His name, for the remission of sin. Saul of Tarsus was told, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) When one is baptized, the Lord adds him to the church, he is born into the family of God, the Lord knows him, and, from that point onward, takes note of his religious devotion.

The Lord knows only His children. He takes note of the religious activities only of those in His spiritual family. Let us be sure that when we strive, we strive lawfully. Let us be sure that we have not been misled. Let us be certain where we stand with Jesus. It will be sad indeed to go to the Judgment thinking that all is well, only to hear those mournful words, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you."

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Highland Oaks Establishes Program for Ministers

Dallas, Texas. Leaders of the Highland Oaks church of Christ have announced the establishment of a two-year Intern/Residency program that is designed to provide training for ministers. The program was conceived by the leadership because of declining ministry involvement and the high attrition rate among ministers among the churches of Christ.

According to Gary Beauchamp, who preaches at the Highland Oaks church, "Our program is 100% nuts and bolts. It is not an academic program and is not designed to compete with existing programs." The program is designed to provide on-the-job training and experience with ministers in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, who will serve as instructors. It will focus on young men who have college degrees. First-year interns will attend class four mornings a week, work under the supervision of a Highland Oaks minister in the afternoons, and conduct two home Bible studies a week. They will also work on a two-month rotation through six areas of ministry, including preaching, home Bible studies, education, singles, youth, couples, involvement, missions, prison ministry, administration and gerontology.

A separate 40-member board of directors will oversee the program. To fund the program, which is tuition free, a $2 million endowment has been raised.

Fifteen applications have already been received for the twenty available positions. The program is scheduled to begin September 1 of this year.

Zambian Prime Minister Makes Goodwill Tour

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The Prime Minister of Zambia, Kebby Musokotwane, came to the United States in April to participate in ceremonies commemorating the Texas sesquicentennial and to make a goodwill tour through Oklahoma. Musokotwane has been a New Testament Christian for 26 years and Prime Minister of Zambia, the second highest post in the land, since April 15, 1985. He began his political career by being elected to Parliament in 1973 and also served in the ministries of Finance, Lands and Natural Resources, Education and Culture, and Treasury before being named Prime Minister.

Growth in Venezuela

Caracas, Venezuela. According to Bob Brown, a missionary in Caracas, there have been over 100 conversions already for 1986, with more than 60 of those conversions occurring in Caracas. The church in Caracas recently broke its attendance record with 321 for a Sunday morning service in April.

Commercials Available

Irving, Texas. Many other religious groups, especially the Mormons, have been producing excellent television commercials. Until recently, the churches of Christ have done little to take advantage of television advertising. Now, Art McNeese has produced some excellent thirty-second spots that generate a thoughtful, positive impression about Jesus. The commercials are available on VHS tape. For more information contact brother McNeese at: South MacArthur Church of Christ, 1401 S. MacArthur Blvd., Irving, Texas 75060.

News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Rocky Mount. According to the Wilson newsletter, David Carter is now preaching for a new congregation in Rocky Mount.

Roanoke Rapids. New attendance records were set in May.

Wilson. Members of the congregation are active in home Bible studies. During April, 86 home sessions were conducted. Also 20 new students were enrolled in correspondence courses.

Asheboro. A plan has been announced to provide van service for senior citizens for their necessary errands.

Kernersville. Linville Forest has appointed the following as additional elders: Manley Fortune, Jim Harrison, and Elmer Lawson. Also the following have been named deacons: Ray Burnette, Joe Forcum, Ken Forcum, and Bob Nelson.

Charlotte. The Parkway church has begun a building fund for a new edifice projected to be started in three years.

Mocksville. After five years at North Main and more than a quarter century in local work, Robert Darnall has announced semi-retirement. He will be available for appointments. Contact him at 704-634-0726. The Darnalls will continue to make their home in Mocksville.

West Jefferson. The recent youth rally was successful, with about fifty in attendance.

NC Conversions:

South Fork, Winston-Salem, 4; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 7; Rockingham 3; Eastchester, High Point, 1; Wilmington 1; W. Jefferson 3; Helen St., Fayetteville, 1; Cary 1; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 2; Wilson 1. Total: 24.

Taylorsville

KEN KOKOTKIEWICZ, Reporting: The minister for the Taylorsville church of Christ is Ken Kokotkiewicz, who has been with this church now for two years. He first worked with the church during the year 1984. He then left for a return visit to Freed-Hardeman College to complete some of his studies. Ken was able to return to the work in Taylorsville in June of last year.

The congregation now averages 40-43 for Sunday morning services, 25 for the evening services and 25 for Wednesday Bible study. As of yet they have no elders.

The congregation is involved in many works to continue to spread and teach the gospel to the community. As a result of this there have been four baptisms since the month of February this year. The congregation also averages 3-4 people to visit the church of Christ for the first time each month.

The Taylorsville church is not yet self-supporting, but there is a goal to be self-supporting within two years to two and one-half years. There is also a five-year long-term goal to be involved in mission work within this time.

Rockingham

DAVID HOOKS, Reporting: There have recently been three baptisms and one restoration. Randal Burton has resigned the pulpit duties here as of the end of May. Several well-qualified brethren in the congregation will be handling the pulpit duties for several months before seeking another preacher. Brethren Doug Oliver, Ray Vanderpool, Don Bahr, Andrew McBride, Will Connell, and I will alternate in this on Sunday mornings. I will preach every Sunday night except the third Sunday each month. On that evening the young men will conduct the entire service, under our youth ministers, Kenny Sturdivant and David Fields.

NEW WORK AT APEX, NC

The population of the Research Triangle area is rapidly expanding, providing new opportunities for church growth. The elders at the church of Christ in Cary, NC, have put a down payment on 2.4 acres in Apex for the purpose of establishing a congregation in a rapidly growing area. Starting in June 1986 the church of Christ at Apex will be temporarily meeting at the Trust Realty office on West Chatham Street in Apex.

Approximately ten families from the Apex area have committed themselves to starting this new work. In addition, Mr. Sammy Flannery, a minister who is being totally supported by the Cisco church of Christ in Cisco, Texas, will be arriving to serve as the preacher for this new congregation. In addition to Mr. Flannery and his wife, another Texas couple, Mr. and Mrs. Gary Adams, have decided to move to North Carolina to work with us in getting the church established in Apex. Apex is considered a mission field "white unto harvest," and the families are committed to making the church a focal point of Christian influence in Apex and the surrounding area.

Financial assistance and equipment are needed. Contact at P.O. Box 688, Apex, NC 27502 or (919) 362-9499.

CAMP ANNIVERSARY

Carolina Bible Camp is celebrating its 30th anniversary during our camp session August 3-16. Camp will be at the Woodmen of the World Youth Camp in the Central Falls community near Asheboro, NC. The special event celebrating the 30th anniversary will be on August 10, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Come, enjoy, and help us celebrate this great occasion.

— H.R. Butler

CHARLES RICHARDSON

Charles Richardson passed away on May 17. Brother Charles served the brotherhood in countless ways through the years and was a bulwark of the church in Rockingham, NC, having served as a deacon, preacher, song leader, teacher, and for the last seven years as an elder.

He had a great knowledge of both Testaments and an excellent ability to rightly divide. He had ability to teach others, standing for the truth. He was one of the greatest influences for Christ in my life and personally encouraged me to preach. He first taught me and went with me to my first preaching appointments at the Philadelphia church in Rockingham and at Monroe. Needless to say he will be greatly missed by me and countless others like me, who have accepted Christ over the years due to his persistent efforts. Many under his influence have become leaders in the church.

— David Hooks

SOUTH CAROLINA

Spartanburg. Central had 632 present for Sunday morning during their "First Annual Youth Rally."

Columbia. St. Andrews Road preacher Terry Gunnells recently received his Master of Theology degree from Alabama Christian School of Religion, graduating **summa cum laude.**

Summerville. Chuck Reese and John Sullivan have been appointed elders.

Winnsboro. Some of the members are making door-to-door contacts in the town of Great Falls, where no congregation now exists.

Newberry. Bill Young is now working

with the church. His phone is 276-6005.

Anderson. A door-to-door canvass was conducted in June. Billy Ringold of Jackson, Tennessee, spoke at evening services. A full report on this campaign will appear in the next issue. Also at Anderson the church has retired mortgages on all properties and is now fully self-supporting. A Ladies Inspiration day was held on May 3. In April two special events were held for men. Terry Wheeler spoke at a Men's Retreat and a Men's Leadership class was completed by fifteen students.

SC Conversions:

Northeast, Taylors, 3; Lexington 1; Winnsboro 1; Summerville 1; North Charleston 4; Duncan 1; Essex Village, Charleston, 1; Central, Spartanburg, 1; Washington Ave., Greenville, 1; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill, 3. Total: 17.

Backfire

Letters to the Editor

Dear brother Winters:

I appreciate your kindness in running my article **Sound Reasoning Is the Only Defense Against Error,** but there is a problem that I need to call to your attention. Sometime before my article went to press I received a call from a gentleman at the printers. He wanted to know if I wanted the "slashes" left in between the statements of the arguments. He said you had edited them out. I told him it was okay to leave them out if you wanted them out. He then asked if I wanted to also remove "modus ponens" and "modus tolens" from the arguments. He asked what they meant. I told him the former was the name of the form of argumentation where the antecedent was affirmed, and the latter was the form where the consequent was denied. He then asked if the girls who were going to set the article up would be required to affirm or deny anything. Well, at this point, I figured my leg was being pulled. So I made no ado over the matter. **Then** when I received my copy of the paper I decided the fellow was actually "out to lunch." Conservative was twice misspelled conservation. The word built was misspelled six times as build, making the sentence to sound stupid. — Paul J. Ditoro, Washington, NC

We sincerely apologize to brother Ditoro for the ill treatment his article received, both from us and from the printers. The printers, at this point, have refused to tell us why their representative did what he did (which in our judgment was a violation of professional ethics) and we simply did not catch the misspelled words in our proofreading (for such we have no explanation unless we slept through it). At any rate, such is inexcusable.

Dear brethren:

My work with this local church will come to an end on June 30, after serving here close to five years. I hope to make Mocksville my home, and in the meantime preach and teach God's word, but not as a full-time located preacher. This could be on a supply or fill-in basis or an arrangement of some other kind. Prior to being in full-time local work I was on the faculty of Freed-Hardeman College, where I served for one year under N.B. Hardeman and four years under H.A. Dixon. During that time I filled various appointments to preach. Any who may be interested in my services are welcome to speak with the North Main elders here in Mocksville, get in touch with E. Claude Gardner, president of Freed-Hardeman College, or with Guy N. Woods of the **Gospel Advocate.** I welcome any inquiries. My home phone is 704-634-0726. — Robert L. Darnell, Mocksville, NC

Brother Darnell is a good man and should be widely used in the kingdom. His experience could mean much to any church.

Dear Howard:

I eagerly look forward to every new issue. **Carolina Christian** is truly a refreshing Christian magazine and your editorials are always insightful and thought provoking. — Rick Parks, Lexington, SC

Dear brother Winters:

I have read the article "If" by Jim Stutts with much interest and concern. I find no problem with the events he relates and support the Scriptural view of the elders. However, I am not convinced that the preacher's responsibility is limited as his view implies. From the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation I have not found one instance where God has approved "group" leadership for His people (e.g., men of the congregation). The Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian dispensations have all had leaders which met God's requirement and there is no less such requirement today. The Scriptures provide for us the basic criteria for leadership today as they did during the absence of elders in the first century. The apostle Paul, in writing to the churches at Corinth (1 Cor. 16:15, 16) and Thessalonica (1 Thess. 5:12, 13) (both congregations lacked elders, which is evidenced by their actions and the way he addressed them), urged them "to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." As a preacher/teacher of the gospel I am sure that brother Stutts in no way implied a preacher/pastor relationship as exists in many denominations. There are congregations today that do not have preachers, yet, even so, the leadership falls to those who are laboring for the Lord (including the preacher) — not singularly but collectively for those so involved in the Lord's work. The Lord, in the New Testament, has provided for a plurality leadership (more than one, e.g., elders) which must be followed if we are to be found pleasing in His sight. "Let all things be done decently and in order." (1 Cor. 14:40.) — Walter B. Mitchell, Irmo, SC

If brother Mitchell is arguing for the appointment of elders (or leaders in the absence of elders) who do not meet all the Scriptural qualifications, then we must take strong exception to him. If he is not so arguing, we fail to see the point of difference between him and brother Stutts.

A Book Review

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

This Is Your Life, Mimi Tate; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 79 pages, paper $2.70.

Death and judgment are realities that most of us seem to take for granted. We want to push them into the closet and do not allow their truth to rule in our lives. To teenagers, death and judgment seem to be so far away. That is what this study book for the teenage Bible class is about. The author travels with teens through a practical and Scriptural view of their lives. With the use of illustrations and examples of teenage life, textual discussions and challenging exercises, the author helps the student to learn and appreciate the practical meaning of death and judgment in everyday living. She handles such topics as the power of one's choices — what to do and what to be, respect for authority, family and home — from birth to the present, Christian service, the source of love, and the challenge of salvation, dating, and marriage. The theme of this study is to be prepared for real living by preparing for real death and judgment. It is an excellent study, refreshing in content and style. It does not "preach," but it does provoke serious thinking and promotes the good Christian life-style! Any teenage girls' class will be blessed with this study. We also recommend it for private study.

Practical Sermons in Outline. Clayton and Howard Winters; Win-More Publications, P.O. Box 897, West Jefferson, N.C. 28694; 128 pages $4.95 paper.

Our world is plagued with the troubles of unbelief, false doctrine, and sin. Since their conversion, these men have dedicated their lives to preaching the truth and salvation from sin that man might seek and find God. They are fervent students of the Bible and that has given them the loyalty and knowledge needed to preach the word of God. This book is a product of those years of preaching. It is divided into two sections with each coauthor contributing 30 sermon outlines. The sermons are textual, topical, or exegetical in nature. They are evangelistic or edifying in purpose teaching men how to be saved, how to live, and what to believe. But most of all, they are Scripture-centered lessons! You will find such titles as *The Purpose of Baptism, Toadstool or Mushrooms, Remaking God,* and *Lessons From Personal Work.* We recommend this resource book for any who want to preach the purity of God's Word.

Teaching Teenage Girls. Sherlie Rowe; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 150 pages, paper $4.95.

The subtitle, "For Those Who Love Them," suggests the theme of this book. Anyone who endeavors to teach teenage girls must learn to love them and this book is written in an effort to teach the teacher how to teach them. The author believes, from Scripture and experience, that it must be done in a loving manner. The book deals with the example of Christ, the world and heart of a teenage girl, the teacher's disposition toward the students. The book is divided into three sections containing a total of 28 chapters: "Introducing the Living Christ to the Teenager," "On Being a Friend to Teenage Girls," and "Let's Assist Her to Have a Marriage Planned by God." It confronts the challenge, thrill and heartbreak of teaching teenage girls. If you are one who teaches teenage girls, you are sharing in the molding of their lives and this book has much to offer.

Editorial Book Views

Studies in Psalms, Robert R. Taylor, Jr.; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 241 pages, paper $5.95.

A marvelous study in Psalms which makes a definite contribution, whether used for class or personal study. It consists of a close study of 12 selected Psalms (1, 8, 15, 19, 23, 51, 90, 119 — two chapters, 122, 139, and 148), and 13 chapters on particular subjects in Psalms, such as "A Portrait of God," "Messianic Prophecies," "Worship," "Prayer," "Sorrow," and "Trust." There are also studies in "The Breadth and Beauty of Psalms," "Tremendous Tributes to God's Word," "Abuses of Psalms," "Errors Refuted in Psalms," "Psalms: A Builder of Great Families," and a final chapter on "Lessons Learned From Psalms." Each of the 26 chapters closes with a large number of questions, thus enhancing its value as a class study guide. As would be expected from this author, you will get a lot of solid meat (which will bring you to a deeper appreciation of Psalms) from its use if you are willing to take the time to trim away the fat (in the form of an overabundance of alliterations, which adds thousands of words to the text but nothing to the study).

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Charts and Sermons for Overhead Projectors, Benny B. Bristow; Quality Publications; 111 pages, paper $5.95.

The overhead projector is a tool that more and more are putting to good use in their teaching and preaching. As we have learned from experience, it can make a lesson far more effective. But up until now there has not been an abundance of material available. That is being remedied now. This book contains 54 charts, ready to copy onto transparencies, along with an accompanying outline for each. Most will be able to use them as they are; others, no doubt, will want to modify them to fit their own needs and personality. But however they are used, the material is good and true to the Book of God, and will enrich your teaching or preaching.

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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 28, NO. 8, AUGUST 1986

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C292

The Lexington church of Christ on Barr Road west of Lexington broke ground Sunday, July 13 for an approximately 8,000 square foot expansion. The congregation's three elders, Ralph Jones, Wendle Northam and Allan Whitacre (left foreground), donned hard hats for the groundbreaking while the congregation looked on.

See Page 15

editorial

THOSE VERSIONS, AGAIN

It has always been the policy of the present editor of **Carolina Christian** to permit a brother in Christ to say what he sincerely believes to be the truth, even on controversial subjects. After he has had his say, we then permit any member of the body of Christ who chooses (with the reservation that he must reply in a brotherly way and show the same sincerity and love of truth as the one to whom he is replying) to answer him in approximately the same space. When both have had their say (or sometime during the process) we may have some editorial comments about the matter. When these three steps are taken nothing else is accepted on the subject until the matter cools for several months (no exact time table has ever been set). We do this for four fundamental reasons: (1) to be fair with everyone who is working to restore New Testament Christianity in the Carolinas; (2) to get (and keep) the issues before our readers (all of us need to know what is going on and what is being taught by others); (3) to keep ourselves out of the business of having to decide for the brotherhood who is right and who is wrong on each subject; and (4) to keep the paper from getting bogged down in brotherhood issues (it is our desire to remain promotional rather than controversial).

With this in view we accepted an article on modern translations, knowing that it would probably create some controversy. It did. And so we ran a reply to it. Ordinarily this would have brought the matter to a close, but in this case we feel strongly that some facts be presented, even though they are in direct conflict with one of the writers and may appear to be in defense of the NIV (which is not our primary intention: we simply wish to state the facts and urge all of us to face them fairly and squarely). We are thus exercising our editorial prerogative to point out some additional matter that we believe our readers have a right to know (and a good number of them have insisted that we supply). This is not an effort to debunk the KJV (it is the translation we use by choice) nor to defend the NIV (which we have no disposition to do, even though we do recognize the fact that it has its merits as well as its demerits as a translation) but rather to make a plea for all of us to use sound arguments rather than prejudical statements when we oppose a translation or any false thing, position, or doctrine. To take a textual problem and make that the basis of an argument against a translation is simply not sound reason, even though it may have great weight with those who are not familiar with textual problems. It has long been our contention that if we cannot make a sound and reasonable argument against a thing, then it is not worth opposing. If it is worth opposing, then there must be some sound Scriptural objections that can be brought against it. We weaken rather than strengthen our cause when we use baseless arguments. But rather than argue this ourselves we have sought for and received permission to use as part of this editorial an article written by Johnny Melton, a member of the Board of Directors of **Carolina Christian,** which ex-

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presses our own view about as well as it would be possible for anyone else to express them. We are using his article just as he sent it to us except for the removal of several pages in which the list of Scriptures given by one of the writers leaves out Christ are quoted in full from both the NIV and the ASV. While we would have preferred to use the list of Scriptures, their insertion would have extended this item beyond the space we can afford for it. Johnny Melton's article follows:

A recent article in **Carolina Christian** raised the question, "Would the above mentioned writer care to explain to a truth-loving people why in the world the word 'Christ' is left out of the NIV in such passages as the following: John 6:69; Acts 15:11; 16:31; Romans 1:16; 16:24; 1 Corinthians 5:4; 9:1; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 3:14; 1 Thessalonians 3:11; Hebrews 3:1; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:9? And the word 'blood' is omitted from Colossians 1:14."

This question was raised concerning another article which had appeared in a previous number of **Carolina Christian.** While I did not write the article which prompted the question I have cited above, I do wish to hazard a response. I believe "truth-loving people" should be informed concerning these matters.

The reasons the words "Christ" and "blood" are not in the NIV in the passages in question is simply because they do not appear in the Greek text from which the NIV was translated. The translators could not have been honest with the text before them and put those words in their translation.

Not only that, but the American Standard Version of 1901, which is generally recognized as the most accurate of English versions, does not have "Christ" or "blood" in any of the passages in question either and for exactly the same reason: The ASV and the NIV were translated from essentially the same basic Greek text.

It is amazing that the American Standard Version can be upheld as reliable and accurate — even the most accurate of English versions — and at the same time the NIV can be castigated as being filled with "blunders, mistranslations and deletions" when the charges leveled against the NIV can be made against the ASV with equal force.

The reason these passages read slightly different from the KJV is due to the existence of what is called a textual variant. The absence of "Christ" or "blood" is not a matter of poor translation. It is a textual matter. However, as with 99% of all textural variants, the sense of the passage is not altered one whit. Get out your King James Translation and read the passages cited above. The meaning in all three translations in exactly the same.

Another statement in the article casts reflection on the NIV's handling of Romans 1:17: "Also in the NIV there is a statement found in Romans 1:17 which comes so close to teaching salvation by faith only that some condemn it on that basis." This is a remarkably abiguous statement. Certainly it casts reflection upon the integrity of the NIV translation. However, nothing substantial is cited regarding the alleged mistranslation which comes "so close" to teaching error. Howard Winters, editor of **Carolina Christian,** has written a **Commentary on Romans** which has been widely acclaimed and warmly received across our brotherhood. Regarding Romans 1:17, brother Winters writes in part: "**from faith to faith:** — A difficult expression but probably means from the beginning of faith to the end of faith. The gospel meets every need of man from faith's inception to faith's fruition. The NIV renders it, 'A righteousness which is by faith from first to last.' " To reject out of hand a translation because of its handling of an admittedly difficult expression is the height of scholarly irresponsibility.

And finally an objection to the NIV is made in these words, "Anyone who has read the 'preface' of the NIV knows that it is mislabeled as a version anyway, it is admittedly a paraphrase — they strove for 'more than a word-for-word translation'!"

To call the NIV a paraphrase and to deny that it is in fact a translation based on the expression cited above demonstrates either ignorance concerning the meaning of the words paraphrase and translation or a willful disregard for truth.

Consider the following from the Preface of my NIV Study Bible: "The translation of each book was assigned to a team of scholars. Next, one of the Intermediate Editorial Committees revised the initial translation, with constant references to the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek. Their work then went to one of the General Editorial Committees, which checked it in detail and made another thorough revision. This revision in turn was carefully reviewed by the Committee on Bible Translation, which made further changes and then released the final version for publication. In this way the entire Bible underwent three revisions, during each of which the translation was examined for its **faithfulness to the original languages** (emphasis mine, JRM) and for its English style.

". . . From the beginning of the project, the Committee on Bible Translation held to certain goals for the New International Version: **that it would be an accurate translation** (emphasis mine, JRM) and one that would have clarity and literary quality and so prove suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing and liturgical use.

". . . The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the thought of the Biblical writers. They have weighed the significance of the lexical and grammatical details of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. At the same time, they have striven for more than a word-for-word translation. Because thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language, faithful communication of the meaning of the writers of the Bible demands frequent modifications in sentence structure and constant regard for the contextual meanings of words."

In the same number of **Carolina Christian** in which the article under review appeared (June, 1986), an article by Dr. Dowell Flatt, Chairman of the Bible Department at Freed-Hardeman College also appeared. Dr. Flatt teaches New Testament Greek at F-HC. His article began with these two sentences: "As the beginning Greek student quickly learns, nearly every Greek word in the New Testament has more than one meaning. Each must be looked at in its historical-grammatical context." That is precisely what the translators of the NIV committed themselves to doing.

If one wishes to read a word-for-word translation, I suggest that he secure a copy of **Berry's Interlinear Greek-English New Testament.** In **Berry's** John 3:16 reads like this: "For so loved God the world that his Son the only begotten he gave, that everyone who believes on him may not perish, but may have life eternal." If this is a word-for-word translation (and it is), then it is obvious that even the King James Version is "more than a word-for-word translation." Obviously, the King James translators made some adjustments in "sentence structure and the contextual meanings of words."

Permit one more illustration. In Greek the word for women and wife is exactly the same. Whether the word is translated woman or wife depends entirely upon the context. And it is the legitimate work of translators to make that decision.

I have written this in the interest of intellectual honesty. I do not believe that the motive of elderships which request that the King James Version or the American Standard Version of 1901 be used in public reading and teaching should be impugned.

I do not believe that the King James Version is either unsound or antiquated. It is my version of choice. I read and study widely in several versions, but I preach from the King James Version almost exclusively.

However, I do believe that many objections which are raised concerning modern translations in general and the NIV in particular are unsound and unwarranted.

I am far more concerned about the fact that so many people are not reading the Bible at all, than I am about the fact that some are reading the NIV.

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Married? Now What?

Don Nix, Union, SC

Recently there has been a great deal of discussion concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage. In my library there is a book that lists eight different theories being taught on the subject. This failure to be able to agree on what the Bible teaches has caused many problems within the church, especially since several of these theories directly contradict others. It is not our intent to get into a discussion of marriage, divorce and remarriage, but, rather the root of the problem, marriage. Proper marriage will prevent divorce and remarriage.

What one does before marriage in selecting a mate is important, but all the planning ahead cannot make a happy marriage unless we are willing to maintain the proper relationship in the marriage. What can I do to insure a happy and complete marriage?

COURT YOUR MATE

Sad to say, but many couples marry and then forget to continue the courtship. The same show of love and affection that you gave before marriage is essential after marriage. Are those around you able to detect your love for your mate? (You don't have to be "kissy, kissy" in public.)

At a church gathering a few years ago, we played a game similar to "The Newly Weds" with a group of young married Christians. The question was asked, "When was the last time you kissed your wife?" Would you believe that many of them could not remember the last time? Not all of us require the same amount of affection, but we all need some. It has been proven that a baby's physical needs can be met, but without affection the child will die. In other words, affection is necessary to the life of a baby. In marriage affection is necessary to the life of the marriage.

When was the last time you courted your mate? Can you remember? Court! Or invite divorce.

CONSIDER YOUR MATE

Men are notorious for having their wives do everything for them and offer nothing in return. Men and women should be willing to do for each other unselfishly.

More women are working outside the home than at any other time. There is still the same amount of work to be done at home. Husbands, do you lessen your wife's work load at home by pitching in with help? Peter called the woman "the weaker vessel," but she puts most men to shame with her energy and giving of herself. She may work all day at a job, then come home and work half the night. Men are too tired! Shame on us.

Walk a mile in each other's shoes. Put yourself in your mate's position and consider how you want to be treated, then treat your mate that way. Have you forgotten how eager you were to please your mate before marriage?

COUNT ON YOUR MATE

There are all kinds of support groups today. We have groups for alcoholics, overweights, addicts, the abused, etc. But the greatest support group is a loving husband or wife. Most of our vows said, "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health." When the world seems to be crashing down on your mate can they depend on you for support?

How often do you and your mate find yourself at cross-purposes? Get it together! Don't leave your mate out there all alone. Let them know that they can count on you.

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR MATE

Why wait until you get to the Marriage Counselor to communicate? Do you wait until you "blow up" to express yourself to your mate? Have you ever said something in anger you wish you had never said? Why not sit down with your mate when you are calm and express your concerns or dislikes? Tell one another what you like and don't like. The calmness of the situation will come much nearer resolving the problem. Like the mechanic who says, "you can pay me now" (buy an oil filter) "or pay me later" (buy a major engine overhaul). We can communicate calmly and privately or communicate in a divorce court when it is usually too late to save the marriage.

This writer knows a couple that loved each other so much that they didn't want to do anything to displease the other. The new wife got up and made coffee which they both drank and this went on for several mornings until the husband apologetically said that he did not like coffee. The wife then confessed that neither did she, but she drank it so he would not have to drink his alone. Their love helped resolve a lack of communication.

COMMIT YOURSELF TO YOUR MATE

"Keep thyself to him/her, and him/her alone." Do you remember that? Most likely you both said it to one another during your wedding. We are to be committed unto the Lord and "to have no other gods" before Him. To follow other gods is to be guilty of spiritual adultery. God will not share us with other gods and we can expect no less of our mates.

Other ways of commitment to your mate will be seen in the fact that you are no longer acting as an individual, but you "two are one." Every act or decision must be for the good of both.

Are you committed to making your mate happy? Are you committed to putting your mate first?

CONCLUSION

Happy marriages are not performed at the altar. They are made through great effort by both partners over a long period of time. But time can be the greatest danger to that happiness. It is how we use the years of marriage that determines its success. The rich, sweet unions we observe about us were not easily accomplished, nor did they magically happen. They are the evidence of love, patience, understanding, commitment and hard work. Lazy people do not have good marriages!

My wish for all is overflowing marital bliss all your life.

Building Better Homes

Howard Winters, West Jefferson, NC

For many years I have been convinced that strong churches depend upon strong homes. If this is the case, then to be a Christian imposes on one the obligation to work toward building better and stronger homes. It is incongruous for Christian homes to be unhappy, weak, or broken — not being the kind of example all ought to follow. Troubled homes are simply not compatible with the Christian faith. If Christ is the center of one's life then He must also be the center of the home. How could one be a follower of Christ and still constantly, by word, attitude, or action, create friction and disharmony in the family? Or to say it another way, if one is a Christian, he is a Christian in the home; if one is not a Christian in the home, he is not a Christian.

Wherever there is disharmony and unhappiness in the home, the kind that threatens to destroy it, there is sin. Homes are not broken by people doing right; they are broken when one or both partners do wrong. Doing right (doing the will of God and living as a Christian should) strengthens the home; doing wrong (letting the devil get the upper hand) wrecks it. Thus when marital partners are Christians, when they make the will of Christ the rule of their lives, they will be contributing to stronger and better homes. Unfortunately, however, both partners are not always Christians. This puts an extra strain on the marriage. In such cases, the Christian must be sure that the cause of the problem lies with the non-Christian rather than with him. The Christian is under obligation to maintain his marriage at all cost (see 1 Cor. 7:10-15). If it is broken, it must be the fault of the non-Christian.

The basic principle in building better homes is to build stronger and better marriages. If this is to be done, there are some principles which must be followed:

1. **Put Christ first.** Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you." (Matt. 6:33.) When one puts Christ first he is a better father, better mother, better husband, better wife, better son or daughter. This is true simply because one cannot put Christ first without making the principle of Christianity the rule of his life. Thus when both partners have Christ uppermost in their hearts and lives, the home rests on a solid foundation. Each can meet the other on common grounds. Their faith always gives them the same point of reference.

2. **Love deeply.** Paul instructs, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Eph. 5:22-25.) There are four Greek words for love, each presenting a different aspect of it (unfortunately we try to express all four concepts with only one word). The first and most important is concerned or willed love; the second is felt or emotional love; the third is passionate or sexual love; the fourth is natural or family love. All four types of love find expression in marriage, but the first is the most needed to give it lasting stability. A marriage can survive if one or more of the others are weak, or even lacking for a time, but not so with the first. There must always be a deep unconditional concern for the happiness and welfare of one's mate for the marriage to grow stronger and better.

3. **Learn to communicate.** Communication is the lifeline of a marriage. No meaningful and lasting relationship can be built without it. A vast majority of wives, and a large percentage of husbands, in marriages going sour give a failure to communicate as the number one source of the problem. It is stranger than fiction that a couple before marriage can talk non-stop half the night on a date and then be on the phone for hours the next day, and this for months on end, and then a few weeks after marriage they have absolutely nothing to say to each other. They seem to have nothing in common to talk about. But here is a rule of thumb that we all need to learn: when communication stops, separation begins. The final break may not come for months or years, and perhaps never, but the gap will continue to widen until communication is restored. It is my judgment that every husband and wife ought to have a time each day when they concentrate on nothing but talking to each other. Whether the subject matter is trivial or profound is not as important as the communication itself. Good communication builds great homes.

4. **Trust without reservation.** Here is a fact that must be faced in every marriage: "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife." (1 Cor. 7:4.) Consider the way the NIV renders this: "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife." Thus when two people marry, each surrenders his body to the other. Sexually they transfer all rights to their mate. The wife thus controls the husband's body and the husband controls the wife's body. This makes unfaithfulness on the part of either unthinkable. For this reason no true Christian will ever give his mate a reason for thinking him untrustworthy. Some, however, have a tendency to jealousy, usually with absolutely no cause. Such weakens the best marriages and will wreck those weakened if a remedy is not found.

5. **Give with no thought of receiving for what is given.** The principle stated by Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), applies in marriage as well as in other matters. Contrary to an often-quoted statement, marriage is not a 50/50 proposition. The best marital partners give all they can to the relationship and demand nothing in return for what they give. However, in a Christian marriage (a marriage where both partners are Christians), both have this attitude — both give their all to each other. This makes an extremely happy marriage.

6. **Forget self and live for your mate.**

When two people marry they commit themselves to fill each other's needs, both physically and emotionally. That is to say, each is committed to the happiness of the other. For this to work, each must keep self in the background. I have personally seen more marriages falling apart because of selfish desires than for any other reason (this is not to say that selfishness is the number one problem overall, but in my experience it has been number one). When either one of the mates begins to ask, "What about my rights and my happiness and my feelings and my desires and my life?" the marriage is in trouble. Concerned love assures that we will be more concerned about our mate (his right, happiness, feeling, desire, and life) than about ourself.

There are other principles that contribute to strong marriages, but if we will work on these they will keep us busy for a good long while.

False Doctrines About Women's Role

John Waddey, Knoxville, TN

What a sad and dreary world it would be it there were no mothers, wives, and daughters to bless our lives and homes. Surely among the most precious gifts of God to man was the gift of woman.

I. God's Will for Women

To properly address the several false doctrines regarding women, we would do well to review first what the Bible teaches about her role, her privileges and limitations.

In creation "Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Tim. 2:13). In the fall, "Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression." (1 Tim. 2:14.) Paul further reasons "For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man . . . for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." (1 Cor. 11:7-9).

In the light of the above facts God instructs that "wives, be in subjection unto (their) own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church." (Eph. 5:22-23.) Older women are reminded to "train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." (Titus 2:4-5.) To Timothy Paul writes, "I desire therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, rule the household." (1 Tim. 5:14.) Thus in the home relation we see woman's role as one of subjection to her husband, gladly accepting the privilege of motherhood and the responsibility for the domestic well-being of her family.

Her position in the church is also spelled out by Paul. "In all the churches of the saints, let the woman keep silent in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection as also saith the law . . . for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church" (1 Cor. 14:33-35.) To Timothy he writes: "Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." (1 Tim. 2:11-12.) Thus her role in the church is one of subjection and quietness, allowing the men to fill the public roles of elders, preachers and teachers of mixed public assemblies.

II. False Views About Women

False teachings are of two general kinds:
(a) That which allows what God forbids.
(b) That which forbids what God allows.

We shall review a number of these faulty views and examine them in light of the Scriptures.

Some would allow women to preach and teach "over man." In days past this was primarily seen among Pentecostal and Nazarene types of churches. Today however, main-line Protestant churches such as the United Methodist, Episcopalians, and Disciples of Christ have opened their pulpits to women.

Arguments for Women Preachers Refuted

Those who allow women to preach, reason that if God calls them to preach, that would authorized them to do so. The problem with this is two fold: (a) God does not call anyone to preach in a supernatural way. He called apostles and prophets for the special work and then inspired them to do it as in Paul's case (Gal. 1:11-16). Today He calls all sinners to Christ through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14) and in that same gospel record He charges us to preach the word (2 Tim. 4:1-2). In the same Bible He prohibits women to teach or have authority over a man (1 Tim. 2:12). The "call to preach" claimed by women is a figment of their imagination. It is wishful thinking, fulfilling the desire of their hearts. (b) God would not call a woman to do that which He has already expressly forbidden. To do such would make His will contradictory and untrustworthy. It would discredit His immutability, making Him as unreliable as man. James assures us that there is no variation with Him (James 1:17).

Defenders of women preachers cite Galatians 3:28 which says that in Christ "there can be no male and female" and conclude that a woman may do anything a man may do. It is a fundamental rule of interpretation that a meaning cannot be attached to a verse that sets it at odds with other plainly spoken teachings of Scripture. Their use of Paul's words in Galatians flies in the face of his message to the Corinthians and Timothy.

To the Corinthians he says: "Let the women keep silence in the church"; "It is not permitted unto them to speak"; "For it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church." This was the belief and practice "of all the churches of the saints." The words he was writing were "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:33-37).

To Timothy he modifies his prohibition by saying "I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion **over a man,** but to be in quietness." (1 Tim. 2:12.)

The view expressed by those promoting women preachers makes the word of God confusing, contradictory and unreliable.

Some argue that Paul's prohibition was not God's will at all. Rather, they say he was a bachelor who did not want to see women given equal opportunity to lead the church; that he was confused by the customs and culture of his day. They conclude that we moderns are not bound by Paul's obsolete opinions. This view is immediately discredited by Paul's two-fold affirmation that it was already the practice of all the churches, and that the words he wrote were the commandment of the Lord. Further if this part of Paul's teaching was his personal (erroneous) opinion? The same could be asked about the entire Bible.

Of course these liberal churches that have joined the "feminist movement" and opened their pulpits, do not see the Scriptures as divinely inspired and authorative for any matter. We remind them however that the words that Jesus spoke will judge them in the last day (John 12:48).

It is often said that "regulations such as these are simply traditions of the early church and thus not of binding force. The church of every age determines what traditions will be held." While we grant that there are numerous specials customs and human traditions that are not matters of salvation, we dispute that whether a woman can teach "over a man" is one of them. Scripture does not treat it as such. There is a plain unequivocal prohibition of the practice. The reasons given have to do with creation and fundamental male/female relationships as ordained by God in every age.

Closely akin to the foregoing discussion is the practice of appointing women as elders or rulers over congregations of disciples. This has been seen in some Presbyterian bodies. However Paul's instructions relation to the qualifications of elders clearly show the fallacy of this practice, for the bishop **must be "the husband** of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2). Also the very word bishop which means **overseer** would keep a woman from the post, since she is forbidden to have dominion **over** a man (1 Tim. 2:12). The pronouns used in reference to elders always are masculine and elders are to be entreated as **fathers** (1 Tim. 5:1).

Those who would place women in the pulpits of churches or in office of elder do so in the face of Bible authority and stand condemned thereby. Faithful Christians honor God's law in this and other matters.

On Judging

Johnny Melton, Statesville, NC

In the final section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus discussed the disciple's relationships. In the outset he declared, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." (Matt. 7:1.) On the surface it may appear that Jesus is teaching that no one can make a value decision concerning the action of another. Sometimes when approached concerning a clear violation of Scriptures, the offender will say, "Who are you to judge me? Don't you know Jesus said, 'Judge not'?" Others are willing to wink at sin and excuse immorality by saying, "Well, you know, Jesus said not to judge."

Let me insist that the foregoing is not the message the Lord intended. That we are to make value decisions concerning our own actions as well as the actions of others is everywhere taught in Scripture. That this is true can be learned in this very context. Matthew 7:6 says, "Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine . . . ." Jesus is saying that spiritually there are some folks who are "dogs and pigs." How can we obey the injunction, "Give not that which is holy unto dogs," unless we can judge whether one is a "dog" or not? In verse 15, Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." The very fact that false prophets come disguised means that we must judge those who claim to be speaking for God. John put it like this, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1.)

So, if the words of Jesus cannot mean that we must avoid any and all assessment of another's actions; and if, in fact, we cannot escape the responsibility of judging, what are we to make of Jesus' words?

First, note that the word which is translated judge literally means to judge harshly, to be censorious or unkind. While we must make value decisions (in order to live as closely to God's will ourselves and to warn and encourage others as well), we must never be harsh and hypocritical in our judgments.

Second, when Jesus says, "Judge not" he is saying that no man has the right to determine one's ultimate destiny. I do not have the right to consign a soul to either heaven or hell. That responsibility belongs only to God. In commenting on this aspect of judging (i.e., determining ultimate destinies), William Barclay offers three reasons why one man has no right to judge another:

1. We never know the whole facts or the whole person.
2. It is almost impossible for any man to be strictly impartial in his judgment.
3. No man is good enough to judge any other man.

Third, we should note that Jesus explains His statement in verse 1 by what He says in verse 2. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Note the words of Jesus in John 7:24: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." How do you want to be judged? Do you want to be

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judged with kindness and compassion; or, do you want to be judged with harshness and vindictiveness? If we wish to be judged righteously then we must be certain that we judge righteous judgment. Certainly things are not always the way they appear. An old Indian saying goes, "Don't criticize your neighbor until you have walked a mile in his moccasins." If you want to be given the benefit of the doubt, certainly you must be willing to do the same for others.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged." Be careful how you view the actions of another, be kind and you shall receive kindness. That is the message of Jesus.

Contributors

Each contributor of $25 or more (to help us publish 1 Corinthians and ultimately to get the paper on a self-sustaining basis) will be listed in the paper and will receive a free autographed copy of **Commentary on First Corinthians** as soon as it comes from the press. We hope many of you will want to join this number.

C.V. Kale	$25.00
Henry Fuhry	$25.00

E.R. Harper — Faithful Servant of God

1898-1986

Garland Elkins, Memphis, TN

God said to Joshua, "Moses my servant is dead." (Joshua 1:2.) He, likewise, could say, "E.R. Harper My servant is dead." Brother Harper, like Barnabas, "was a good man." Like Paul, he "preached the word," and "was set for the defense of the gospel." Like Appolos, he was "an eloquent man" and "mighty in the Scriptures." Like John, he was tender and compassionate. He was a family man. He deeply loved and appreciated his family, and they loved and appreciated him.

When brother Harper lived in Little Rock, he pioneered in preaching the gospel over a powerful radio station. As a result of his great efforts in that field, he became the best known preacher in Arkansas. He also played a major role in arranging the Hardeman-Bogard Debate, which is among the most prominent of any debate in which one of our brethren participated and was a resounding victory for truth. Brother Harper was an outstanding debater in his own right, having engaged in numerous such discussions.

He was a master of assemblies. His lessons, whether in the pulpit or on national radio, were eminently Scriptural. They were filled with Scripture and straightforward but always presented in a loving and kind fashion. His sermon on "The Church the Prophets Saw" was truly a masterpiece. I have never heard it excelled. When brother Thomas B. Warren made the announcement that our 1980 **Spiritual Sword** lectureship theme would be "The Church," brother Harper and I were sitting together. He whispered to me, "Call it 'The Church — The Beautiful Bride of Christ.' " We accepted his suggestion, and a large hardback book has within its cover some of the finest material available on "The Church — The Beautiful Bride of Christ." It was during that lectureship that we had an Appreciation Dinner honoring brother Harper.

Through the years brother Harper was loved and appreciated by multitudes of people for his spirituality, mental ability, moral character, courage, and humility. He had encouraged many young preachers, and his love, compassion, and comfort had often been extended to those in sorrow. He was successful in leading many souls to Christ. Brother Harper shall truly be missed. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14:13.)

NC Evangelism Seminar August 29-31, 1986

Our seminar this coming Labor Day weekend is truly a remarkably well planned program which features some of the greatest men and women in the church of Christ today! Over the next several weeks, we will highlight each of the speakers or teachers . . . both the men and women for you. You will be well advised to plan to attend and to bring **all** of your family and friends.

This seminar is a study in the dynamics of servanthood under the overall title: **The Last Shall Be First.**

One of the principal speakers is Dr. M. Norvel Young, President Emeritus of Pepperdine University, Malibu, California. Brother Young is one of the best known and most respected men in the body of Christ, worldwide. His credentials are phenomenal — like a many-faceted diamond — he is a minister of the gospel: an educator and chief administrator; a civic-minded businessman who serves on several national boards of directors; a writer, author and editor who founded **20th Century Christian** and **Power for Today** magazines; a humanitarian who helped established church relief and missions in Germany following World War II and also the Lubbock Christian Children's Home and Lubbock Christian College; a world traveler who has visited 60 nations and lecturer who has spoken in 20 nations; and a Christian family man who has received great honors, such as the George Washington Medal of Honor from Freedoms Foundations (1961 and 1963), Valley Forge, Pa., Alumnus of the Year, Abilene Christian University (1958), and an honorary L.L.D. from Lubbock Christian College.

Brother Young served as minister of the Broadway church of Christ, Lubbock, Texas. It became the largest congregation among the churches of Christ during his period of ministry. Brother Norvel Young became the President of George Pepperdine College in 1957. It had a student body of 950 on 34 acres in Los Angeles. Upon retiring as Chancellor of Pepperdine Unversity in 1984, it had become a great university of 9,500 students, five schools, and a magnificent 830 acre campus in Malibu, California with branches in Heidelberg, Germany, Irvine, Woodland Hills and LAX.

As we have viewed the pathway of life that brother Young has taken, we should be made conclusively aware that he is a great servant of Christ . . . one who educationally and experientially can encourage and challenge us to be better servants of the Lord! For additional information contact: Brooks Avenue Church of Christ, 700 Brooks Avenue, Raleigh, NC; phone: (919) 821-2400, or J.R. Ogburn (919) 787-3380.

Brotherhood News

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Milk Sent to Polish Churches

Vienna, Austria. As a result of the nuclear reactor accident at the Chernobyl plant in the Soviet Union last April, fresh milk in Poland has shown high levels of radiation. In response to the need for milk in Poland, three tons of dried milk and baby formula were taken into the Polish city of Krakow on June 9 by David Dawidow, missionary to Poland.

Dawidow estimates that the need for milk will last for two months. With that in mind, hopes were to deliver a total of ten tons of powdered milk and baby formula to Poland, with the cost amounting to $80,000.

Prison Baptisms Up

Oklahoma City, Okla. According to a

recently released annual survey, prison ministry baptisms increased by 68 percent in 1985. Workers in 280 churches of Christ with prison ministries reported 1,622 baptisms in 1985 as compared with 1,104 baptisms through 211 churches in 1984.

The Prestoncrest church of Christ in Dallas, Texas reported the largest number of baptisms with 225. The survey reveals that 62 percent of the baptisms were reported by Texas churches. Texas churches baptized 1,006 inmates, followed by Tennessee (118), Oklahoma (95), Louisiana (89), California (86), and Missouri (50).

Power Preachers in Training

Lubbock, Texas. According to a spring survey by Dayton Keesee of the Sunset School of Preaching, fewer students are interested in becoming full-time preachers. Keesee's survey found a 13 percent drop in students preparing for full-time ministry from 1980 to 1985 among Christian colleges. In schools of preaching, he found 37 percent decline in interest in full-time ministry over the same period. The survey included seven schools of preaching and 15 colleges and universities.

While the survey did not attempt to collect data to determine the causes for these trends, Keesee said he believes the decline can be attributed to economic pressures, church "bickering" and a poor image of ministers' roles.

Uganda Relief Begins

Nashville, Tenn. The Ashwood church of Christ in Nashville has begun a major effort to assemble three medical relief teams to go into Uganda during 1986. The first trip was to have been made June 29-July 13.

Plans for the medical teams had their beginning October 31, 1985, when a letter from the Uganda church of Christ in East Africa was received by the church in Brussels, Belgium. The letter stated, "There has been war in our area. Most of our Christians lost their lives during this sad period. We managed to collect about 320 orphans and widows, who are kept about 70 miles away from the war zone." Arnold Huyghebaert, a missionary in Brussels who is sponsored by the Ashwood church, quickly took the initiative and began an emergency aid project. Huyghebaert and Tony Leuteritz, a French doctor, arrived in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, on December 12, 1985 and immediately began caring for the sick. Food and medical supplies arrived about three weeks later.

According to Huybhebaert, "A civil war was still going on in Uganda, practically unnoticed by the western world. Some of the former troops of Idi Amin were still looting and murdering and held part of southern Uganda in their power." On January 25, 1986, Kampala fell to guerillas of the National Resistance Army. The U.S. government is taking a positive view of the new government in Uganda and its regard for human rights.

Officials at the State Department have told the Ashwood leaders that relief from the churches of Christ will be welcomed. The Ugandan embassy in Washington has also endorsed the project.

Don Yelton, who works with the African relief program at the White's Ferry Road church of Christ in West Monroe, Louisiana, made a recent trip through the country. He reported that, "Hardly a family in the country has not seen close family members killed, wounded, and tortured." Others have reported seeing human skeletons strewn throughout the countryside.

Each medical team will stay in Uganda for a period of two weeks, visiting two or three sites where there are churches. For more information on how to help with the Ugandan medical relief program, write Ugandan Relief Fund, Ashwood Church of Christ, P.O. Box 120486, Nashville, TN 37212.

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News Brief

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday each month.

NORTH CAROLINA

High Point. Gary D. Durham has moved from Bluefield, West Virginia to preach for the Eastchester church.

Jacksonville. The Bell Fork congregation has sent a report of two new births in April, twelve in May, and two in June.

Clyde. The Central Haywood church reported a record attendance for the first Sunday in July. Their work is growing.

Charlotte. Westside has received the resignation of Calvin Bennet from the eldership. Three other men continue to shepherd. Brother Bennet has been a faithful servant and all who know him regret that his health has made him cut back on some responsibilities.

Cary. Bud Gibson has resigned from the eldership at Cary. Their bulletin says, "We thank you Bud for the years of service to the congregation."

Raleigh. Brooks Avenue continues a good work with the Polk Youth Center. In just one week in July ten young men obeyed the gospel.

Lumberton. Albert Gardner of Spartanburg recently held a gospel meeting. In his report of the meeting in the Central bulletin he said that Roland Adams, who has preached at Lumberton for seveal years, wants to retire. A replacement is needed. Contact brother Adams, P.O. Box 2608, 28359; or (919) 738-4106.

NC Conversions:

Westside, Charlotte, 3; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 18; Gastonia 5; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 3; Helen St., Fayetteville, 2; Burlington 2; Northside, Charlotte, 1; Bell Fork, Jacksonville, 16; Broad St., Statesville, 1; Kingsbury, Sumter, 3; Rockingham 1. Total: 55.

Rockingham

DAVID HOOKS, Reporting: We would like to extend our heart-felt thanks to all the churches that supported our Annual Youth Dialogue. There were twelve churches represented. We love you all for your eagerness for spiritual exercise and development and welcome your participation again next year. We also will appreciate invitations for our youth to attend your special activities.

Also I am happy to report that Chris Pace was restored after twelve years of unfaithfulness. He is eager to serve the Lord and has already begun some good work with our youth. The same night that he was restored Marshall Baldwin was baptized.

Preacher Needed

The Wilkesboro congregation is seeking a full-time evangelist. Write the church: Attention Search Committee, P.O. Box 81, Wilkesboro, NC 28677

SOUTH CAROLINA

North Charleston. On July 13 Ralph Richardson was added to the eldership.

Union. Saturday, September 6, is the date for a Ladies Seminar at the ByPass church in Union. The theme will be the "Portrait of a Lovely Life." The time will be 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Speakers: Azalee Glenn, Union; Yvonne Reeder, Greenville; Karen Soper, Georgetown; Ann Rhodes, Mauldin; and Freda Ramsey, Mocksville, N.C.

North Charleston. Jack McNeil, preacher for the Berkeley congregation, preached at North Charleston on June 29 regarding the needs at Berkeley for a larger building. Following the lesson a contribution of over $1,300 was given to assist that work.

S.C. Conversions:

Central, Spartanburg, 4; St. Andrews, Columbia, 1; North Charleston 1; Fairview, Spartanburg, 5; Duncan 1; Lexington 2; Northeast, Taylors, 6; Essex Village, Charleston, 2; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill, 1. Total 23.

Fairview, Spartanburg

BILL GRIFFIN, Reporting: Brother John Griffin, a recent graduate of Freed-Hardeman College, has been appointed minister at Fairview, effective July 15. Johnny is a native of Moore, South Carolina.

Dr. Bill Griffin has accepted a position as Dean of Instruction at Allen County Community College in Iola, Kansas. "It has been a pleasure to serve Sherman College as Academic Dean and the Fairview church minister. Please pray for my family and me in this move. God bless the church in the Carolinas and the world."

The Lexington Church Expands

The church of Christ which meets at 649 Barr Road broke ground Sunday, July 13, in preparation for a major expansion.

The congregation's present meeting facilities, built in 1981, is comprised of a main auditorium with a capacity of 180 and six classrooms. Construction plans call for a new semicircular 336-seat auditorium, seven more classrooms, a fenced play area for children and a drive-under canopy for unloading in inclement weather.

Growing attendance has hastened the Lexington church to enlarge. Even with several families out of town with summer vacations, church attendance reached 197 on Sunday, July 6. The record attendance was 202 on a Sunday morning last March.

Minister of the Lexington church is Richard Parks. The congregation meets at 649 Barr Road off U.S Highway 1 west of Lexington. Elders of the congregation are Ralph Jones, Wendle Northam and Allan Whitacre.

Burris Construction Company of Columbia will build the church addition. Financing for the project was arranged through Lexington State Bank of Lexington. Construction will be completed in January 1987.

Our Defense Against Evil

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

When Jesus ate with sinners, He was not condoning their sinful way. Rather, He was striving to help them change it. He could see the potential saint within the sinner. When a change did come, He rejoiced. When a change did not occur, Jesus mourned for them (Matt. 23:37).

So, God revealed His truth to man that we would be taught to overcome and defend ourselves against the evil in our world, that we would have the right standard of truth to obey and gain that victory over sin. "Your word have I written in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Ps. 119:11.) This is the purpose of the Scriptures (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Titus 2:11-14).

Satan is an enemy of every human life, of every soul, of every society! He is working hard to destroy these things with his sinful ways. Notice how he is described in the Scriptures.

1. He is a liar who has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9; John 8:44). He wants to control our minds and he will if we accept and believe whatever we are told (Prov. 14:15).

2. He is a destroyer of life (1 Pet. 5:8). He wants to control our body's desires and he will if we think that it does not matter what we do or say.

3. He is a ruler (Rom. 6:12-13). If we choose not to obey God in anything, Satan **will** take the opportunity we have given him to rule in our lives by planting the seed of a sinful thing in its place.

Living righteously or sinfully is a **choice that we make** (cf. Eccl. 7:29). Satan is working hard to lead us into the sinful life of which he is the author. Will we follow? If not, how will we defend ourselves against him, against his evil ways, against temptation?

Our defense against evil is the word of God. If we do not want to live the sinful life, we must have a working knowledge of the Bible. We need to know, believe, and obey what it teaches. We must know its truths and have our convictions from it or we will yield to temptation. Remember Joseph (Gen. 39:9-12)? Consider what God teaches us in Proverbs 6:20-23.

1. To defend ourselves against evil, we need a humble respect for God's law, an attitude that wants God to rule our lives by His word so that Satan cannot rule our lives. We depend on what the Bible says and will not abandon or neglect it. To defend ourselves against the disobedience of sinful practices, false doctrines, and unbelief, we will study the Bible and obey only what the Lord has commanded.

2. We cannot be faithful without God's law. It is the lamp and light of our lives. If we put it out, we stand directly in the dangers of the darkness of disobedience and sin. So it is good for us to hear God's word, for its reproof will help us. Reproof from God's word will **teach** right from wrong and truth from error; it will **correct** to bring us out of our sinful or unbelieving ways; it will **save** by bringing us to repentance for forgiveness (cf. 1 John 1:5-10).

The challenge is this: Are we interested? Do we care? Do we want to be right and live right? (James 1:21-22). We must not pick and choose but live by all of God's truth in all things. We do not hear then turn our backs; our ears and our minds must be open to God. We will not obey if our minds will not listen to the truth (John 10:27-30).

So beware of those people who are already deceived, destroyed, or ruled by Satan. They want you to follow them. There are many issues facing the Lord's church today, as in every generation. Yes, there is freedom from error and immorality in the truth of God's word (John 8:31-32). Study the Bible and let it only be our teacher in these matters. Then we will know God's truth and we will know what to do, exactly.

Conclusion

Hear this final encouragement: "How sweet are thy words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps. 119:103.) The word of God and our obedience to it, our obedience to Him, is our defense against the evil of error and immorality. What is our attitude towards it? If we like it, then we will find in it our salvation. But what will happen to us if we do not like the truth when we hear it?

Growth of the Church

Bill Young, Newberry, SC

In Acts 6:7 we read, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." Throughout the book of Acts we read of the growth of the New Testament church as the word of God was preached (2:41; 4:31-32; 5:14; 6:1).

Today we seem to become discouraged because we do not see the same response to the preaching of the word. Because we do not have this response, does it mean the church is not growing? I think not. In too many areas we like to measure the growth of the church by the large numbers we may be having in our assemblies, but what indicates the true growth of a congregation of God's people? I would like to suggest we ask a series of questions that might help us in reaching this answer:

1. Is there a greater love among the members one for another (1 Thess. 4:9)?

2. Are the elders taking oversight of the flock and providing the proper food for them to grow on (Acts 20:28)?

3. Do the husbands love their wives more and are the wives submitting themselves to their own husbands as it is fit in the Lord (Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:18)?

4. Are the children obedient to their parents (Eph. 6:1)?

5. Are those that are hungry, naked, those in prison, those who may be strangers

or physically sick being cared for and their needs being met (Matt. 25:31-46)?

6. Is there a greater concern for the widows and orphans (James 1:27; 1 Tim. 5:3-10)?

7. Does godliness, purity, and honesty prevail among the members (1 Tim. 2:2)?

8. Is the word of God being taught to those that are lost (Matt. 28:18-20)?

9. Are all things being done without murmuring and complaining (Phil. 2:14)?

10. Is sin being rebuked (1 Tim. 5:20)?

11. Are the aged men, sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith and love and in patience (Titus 2:2)?

12. Are the aged women behaving as becometh holiness, teachers of good things, teaching the young women to be sober, to love their husbands and children (Titus 2:3-4)?

13. Are the young men sober minded (Titus 2:6)?

14. Do all the members strive to put God, Christ and the church first in their lives (Matt. 6:33)?

15. Does each member of the body of Christ enjoy working in the Lord's vineyard (1 Cor. 15:58; Rom. 12:11)?

I am sure that you could think of several other areas that could be measured. It is my prayer that each one of us will strive to grow so that the church of our Lord will go forth and not only grow in number, but also spiritually.

Backfire

Letters to the Editor

Dear Howard:

I want you to know that we appreciate you publishing the kind remarks by Larue and Mary Eva Burke in the May issue. The feeling between the Fuhrys and Burkes is mutual. They are staunch members of the church and have been influential in making **Carolina Christian** available to members of the congregation where they worship in Naples, Florida (during the winter). Thank you also for publishing the comments by brother Criss Carter who is one of our elders at Biltmore church of Christ. He is a good man and there is warm mutual feeling between he and I. And, perhaps as much if not more, your continuing good remarks about me are gratifying. I hope I will always be able to fulfill those thoughts. — Henry L. Fuhry, Swannanoa, NC

This was the last letter brother Fuhry wrote to us before his homegoing on Wednesday, May 29 (it was postmarked May 21, eight days before his death). In his passing we lose a staunch supporter and an extraordinary friend. We will miss him much, but the world, and especially *Carolina Christian,* is richer because he passed this way.

Dear brother Howard:

It is good to be back in the Carolinas working for the Lord once again. I plan to try to write at least one article a month for **Carolina Christian**. I continue to enjoy the rich articles that are in the paper and look forward to working with you again. — Bill Young, Newberry, SC

It is always good to welcome old workers back to the Carolinas. Brother Young has lived elsewhere for several years but he has continued to subscribe to this paper. He is thus informed!

Dear Howard:

I continue to appreciate the excellent work you do. **Carolina Christian** is one magazine I always want to continue receiving. Here is some help ($25.00) for the commentary on 1 Corinthians. — Geoffrey Sikes, White Bluff, TN.

Geoffrey Sikes is a native (or almost so) of the Carolinas and a friend from his teen years. He is now one of the outstanding young preachers of this generation. We are both honored and made humble by his kind words.

Dear Howard:

I prize your friendship so very much and the fine work you are doing. I have several of your books and want the **Commentary on**

First Corinthians when it is published. Enclosed is $25.00 to help toward that end. — Paul Murphy, Asheville, NC

Many years ago we worked in a campaign in Asheville and stayed in the Murphy's home. Our friendship has continued over the years. Without such friends, we could do little or nothing.

Dear brother Winters:

I want to express my appreciation to you and the staff for the fine work you are doing with **Carolina Christian.** "Divorce Is Sin," an article written by Terry Wheeler in the March issue, was thought provoking and very timely. Enclosed is a contribution ($25, HW) to help publish your commentary on First Corinthians. — C.V. Kale, Gastonia, NC

Dear brother Winters:

I have just come home from the hospital, after being in and out twice. I am much better now and hope to be back in office tomorrow. . . . Please pray for the new prison and hospital ministries we hope to begin very soon. This will be the second of its kind since the death or murder of my dear foster mother, Elaine Brittell. She did this for many years in Livingstone 300 miles from here, but it has never been done in this city. It will be done at my own expense. I hope to be able to preach every Sunday morning for an hour in our state prisons (I praise the Lord they will allow the prisoners to be taken out for baptism). And then in the afternoon we will give out tracts and teach the sick at our big hospital. Please pray that we may win many souls to Christ. Who will go? There are so few to do the harvesting but so many to gather. Remember us for tracts, old Bibles and song books for the prison and hospital work. I wish I could sit down and talk with you of the great need of more workers and of all the other help we need here in Africa. — Douglas Brittell Sibazia, Zambia, Africa

If anyone would like to help with clothing, tracts, papers, books, or song books, you may send them to brother Sibazia in care of Church of Christ, P.O. Box 36355, Lusana, Zambia, Africa.

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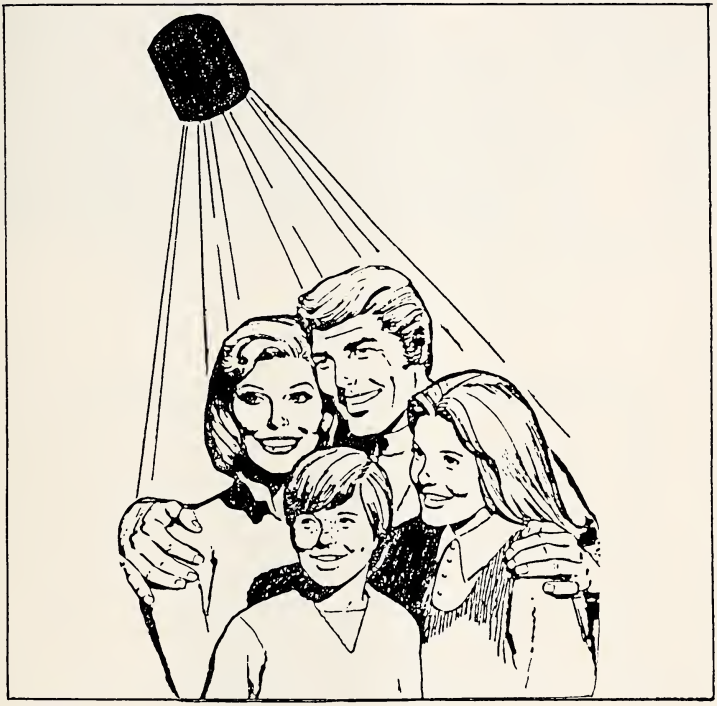

1986 North Carolina Lectureship:
September 2, 3, 4, 5

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: Paul Faulkner
Abilene Christian University

E. Ray Jerkins
Nashville, Tennessee

Place of Lectureship:
Linville Forest Church of Christ
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CAROLINA CHRISTIAN

VOL. 28, NO. 9, SEPTEMBER 1986

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1915-1986
Henry Fuhry — See page 6

editorial

DRUNK OR SICK?

The drinking of alcoholic beverages is often justified upon the grounds that alcoholism is an uncurable disease rather than a self-imposed addiction. This reminds us of an old story that has been around for many years. It seems that an old hand at drinking was out with the boys for a "good" time. He drank too much (and we think any is too much) and begin to feel its disastrous results. He managed to get home but got so sick that he felt sure that he was going to die. He called his wife, who had been patient with him for many years, and informed her that the end was approaching. He requested that she pray for him. Accordingly she got down on her knees beside the bed and began to pray. "O Lord, have mercy on my poor drunk husband!" Whereupon he shockingly whispered to her, "Don't tell Him I'm drunk. Tell Him I'm sick."

While we are not greatly disposed to argue with those who argue that alcoholism is a disease, we still take a dim view of their concept of what constitutes sickness. We know, and we think that they know, and we think that they know that we know, that whatever we call it, alcoholism is a self-imposed affliction and not a disease in the usual sense of the word. The fact is, those who so argue want it to be a disease so that they can drink and pass the responsibility for it on to something that is beyond their control. That is, they want the sin without the consequences. They want the drinking without the addiction. They want the effects of drinking without the effects being drunkenness. They want to exercise their will to drink but want to place the responsibility for drinking upon something other than the will. In short, they want a remedy without taking away the cause. Or as Vance Havner put it, "Total abstinence is considered victorian and puritanical. We discuss what to do about alcoholism, but nobody seems to want to do much about alcohol. And that is simply a matter of trying to mop up the floor while you leave the faucet running."

Before we conclude absolutely that alcoholism is a disease rather than an addiction, there are some things that should be seriously considered:

1. If it is a disease, then drinking is a worse crime than it would be were it an addiction. This is true for a number of reasons: (1) It is a self-imposed sickness. The person himself is responsible for it. And the person himself has the remedy or cure for it (total abstinence). There has never yet been a known alcoholic without the use of alcohol, and there never will be. Alcohol is the cause; alcoholism is the effect. Without the cause, the effect is impossible. (2) It can be remedied (that is, it can be cured for all practical purposes). Take away the alcohol and alcoholism is impotent and for all practical purposes non-existent. Thus anyone who has become addicted to alcohol may throw off the shackles of slavery by ceasing to drink alcohol. Stop the cause and you stop the effect. (3) The Scriptures prohibit its use as an intoxicant (e.g. Prov. 20:1; 23:29-32; Eph. 5:19). That is to say, if it is a disease then the Scriptures prohibit one from imposing the disease upon himself. Drunkenness (and

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drunkenness is condemned whether by an alcoholic or one who claims he can control the intake), if it is a disease, is the only one known to man that is condemned by the sober old book, the Bible. (4) It will cause one to be lost (Gal. 5:19-21). What other disease is listed as sinful by God's word? None. Thus if alcoholism is a disease it is a crime because it is a disease that can be prevented (the world has never known a alcoholic who never took a drink) and one that can be remedied by the individual himself (with the help of God's power exercised through the gospel). If alcoholism is a disease it is therefore an inexcusable disease. One is only fooling himself when he justifies his drinking on the grounds that it is a disease. God knows better. His family knows better. And all rational thinking people know better.

2. If it is a disease, then all other undesirable and sinful habits are diseases also. Is drug addiction a disease? Is addiction to nicotine (smoking) a disease? Both are if alcoholism is. And so is every other undesirable and sinful addiction. Let us consider smoking and its results. Addiction to nicotine is as much a disease as is addiction to alcohol. In the former one cannot smoke tobacco without becoming addicted to it; in the latter many (and perhaps all to some extent) cannot drink alcohol without becoming addicted. If alcoholic addiction is a disease, so is nicotine addiction. There can be but little doubt (in fact, no doubt at all based upon our present knowledge) but that smoking causes lung cancer (though it is not the only cause). Now would one developing lung cancer (caused by smoking) be justified in arguing that he has a disease that requires him to smoke, and because of that disease he is not responsible for the destruction of his lungs? Surely not. The fact is, smoking is a self-imposed addiction; so is alcoholism. The cause of the addictions is tobacco and alcohol. Take away the cause and you take away further addiction. To justify one on the basis of sickness is to justify the other (and many other addictions as well). Are we ready for that? We hope not.

3. If it is a disease, then that is the greatest possible reason for not drinking alcohol. While we do not concede that it is a disease (and it is certainly not in the usual sense of the term), for the sake of argument let us grant that it is. Would that then be an excuse to drink? Indeed not. It is all the more reason not to touch it in any way. If a man has a disease (such as high blood pressure) that salt made worse, is that an excuse to eat salt? Certainly not! It would be the best reason in the world not to eat it. It has long been our judgment that the basis reason (and perhaps the only fundamental reason) for calling alcoholism a disease rather than an addiction is to excuse the drinking of alcohol — to make the drinker an innocent victim rather than a responsible sinner. The drinker can thus say, "I have a disease; thus I am not responsible for my drinking — the disease is." But the fact is, the alcoholic has an addiction (brought on by his use of alcohol) and it is his choice to drink and thereby enhance his addiction. But if the addiction is considered as a disease, that is all the more reason why one should accept and apply the remedy (total abstinence) and not take into his body the very thing that causes the disease and keeps it alive and active. We conclude therefore that if alcoholism is a disease, it is one that is self-imposed and one that the man himself can end (for all practical purposes). To feed it, to continue it, is inexcusable and sinful — inexcusable because man knows how to control it and sinful because it violates the law of God. And to call it a disease makes it even more inexcusable and sinful.

4. If it is a disease, then it is a mechanism built into the body by God for the purpose of warning us against the improper use of alcohol. This is true also of drugs and tobacco (or any other addictive substance). As the addiction comes on, it is a warning of the body that one is abusing his body — it is a flashing red light that warns of danger ahead. If one heeds the warning, he will stop; if he does not the body has positively and clearly signaled a warning that can be ignored only at tremendous cost. It seems to us that anyone who has ever been in the presence of one dying of lung cancer, seeing the smothering, the grasping for breath, the horror of knowing that all this is useless and could have been avoided, and then turns away and willfully takes up smoking (it appears to us that

it would make anyone stop smoking) is totally ignoring a divine warning and thereby shows his disrespect for God, for life, and for his own body. Anyone who sees what drugs does to the human body and mind and with his eyes opened to these facts and still takes up the improper use of drugs is acting irresponsible and extremely foolish. But perhaps even worse (if anything can be worse) is the one who sees what alcohol does to the alcoholic (and to a great extent to anyone who drinks) and still starts drinking, even in what he may call moderation, is sinning against knowledge — sinning against a positive and clear warning from God, and that makes him a fool of the worst sort (cf. Prov. 20:1). Such a one disregards all caution and plunges willingly and headlong into that which he knows is addictive and destructive. Thus whether we call alcoholism a disease or an addiction it is, in our judgment, a divine mechanism built into the body to warn man in time to head off disaster. It is beyond our power to conceive how anyone could see what tobacco, drugs, and alcohol are doing to the lives of millions and then willfully take up the use of either. God has built into the body of each of us a mechanism which cries out loud and clear that when one starts smoking, using drugs, or drinking alcohol addiction is all but certain. If one heeds the divine warning built into his body he will never take another drink of alcohol for the purpose of intoxication.

To the Christian there is a far more powerful reason for total abstinence: To drink is to break the law of God, to violate His holy will. And he has learned that anytime one breaks the law of God he does more than violate the divine will: he also breaks himself against that law.

THE WAY OF UNITY FROM A BAPTIST PREACHER

Our estranged brethren in the conservative Christian churches, in order to retain their use of instrumental music in worship without Scriptural authority, have adopted a hermeneutical principle (attitude or approach toward the study of the Scriptures) which makes it impossible for them to be consistent and still teach the Bible as the only source of faith and practice in the Christian system. If they are true to their adopted principle they are forced to say, "The Bible plus all that is not specifically prohibited by the Bible is the source of our faith and practice." The Scriptures are thus not the limits of their practice, as they are with us. We believe divine revelation offers us a complete system of faith (cf. Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-4). That is to say that it authorizes everything pertaining to godliness. Unrevealed things are not authorized and thus must be rejected as means of serving God (cf. 1 Thess. 5:21). Or another way to say the same thing, the Scriptures reveal all things which are to be done in service to God. What they do not reveal is no part of the divine system and therefore cannot be either believed or practiced as matters of righteousness. On the other hand, our estranged brethren have adopted the attitude (foreign to the Scriptures) that the silence of the Scriptures authorize — that is, anything not specifically forbidden by the Scriptures may therefore automatically become a part of faith and practice, an acceptable act of righteousness. This attitude says that we not only follow the instructions given in the Scriptures, we are also authorized to add anything not specifically condemned. Thus to them the Bible is a book that specifically forbids all that is wrong rather than one revealing all that is right. We say the Bible teaches (authorizes) all that is right and thereby forbids all that it does not specifically teach; they say it forbids all that is wrong and thereby authorizes all that is not specifically forbidden. This difference is most accutely seen in the use of instrumental music in worship. The Bible says sing. That then is clearly the limits of authorized practice (according to our hermeneutical principle). But they say it does not say not to play on an instrument. Thus playing (according to their hermeneutical principle) is authorized because it is not forbidden.

This is a crucial difference between us and there can be no unity, now or ever, among us, regardless of how sweet our union meetings may be, how irenic our discussions, or how much we may love and respect one another, until it is resolved. It was this difference that divided us in the first place, and it is only by a resolution of this difference that we can ever be united. But we are not the only ones who have seen the hermeneutical principle which they have adopted as the basis of division and the one which we have adopted as the only possible grounds of unity. The following are exerpts from an address by the Rev. T. Armitage, a powerful Baptist preacher, delivered in New York City over 125 years ago.

"Christian unity must be scriptural, or it is unreal, it is nothing. Therefore, nothing but a return of all those who love the Savior to the naked teachings of the Bible as the Father and the Son avowed those teachings, can ever result in Christian unity. Christian bodies may declare an armistice and be peaceable, but it is one thing to be peaceable and another to be united. It is a shame that one man should denounce another as exclusive, because that other more literally and fully obeys the word of God than himself. God has expressed His will in the broadness of infinite thought, and that man who does not scruple to obey every part of it is the most catholic believer. His exclusiveness is exclusive oneness with Christ in obeying His will. . . .

"I take it, then, that the only way in which we Christians can be united is to agree that we will mutually obey whatever is positively enjoined in the New Testament, and insist on nothing beyond that. Let each man appeal to the Bible only, and he will need to ask for no concession from his brethren. Opinion will then give place to Christian faith; convenience, and preference, and expediency, to divine authority. How common it is for Christians to retain their distinct peculiarities, because they **are not forbidden in the word of God** (emphasis his, HW). This is a dangerous principle; it is one of the rocks on which Christian sects split. The things that are specially required are the things that are to be done, and not the things that are not specially forbidden. Luther fell into this trap. Carlstadt demanded of him: 'Where has Christ **commanded** (emphasis his, H.W.) us to elevate the host?' 'Where has He forbidden it?' Luther retorted. So, because it was not positively forbidden, Luther concluded that it must be done. Our trouble springs largely from this false position. If we should only ask that each tastes and preferences should yield to God's word, we would soon begin to respect each other's views of it, and to grow into real unity." (**Lard's Quarterly**, Vol. III, page 75.)

There we have it! We can have Scriptural unity on these grounds, but on no other. The Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone, must be our only source of faith and practice. Those who love unity more than their opinions will go back to the Bible with us, dropping everything not taught therein; those who love their opinions (unrevealed things) more than the word of God must forever remain divided.

"Attend This Good Work for Only $$"

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

Being affluent is wonderful! Our pocket change enables us to enjoy flings that most other countries only dream about. We spend billions on entertainment, cosmetics, sports, candy and other sweets. Of course this may explain why so few are saving. We act many times like there will be no famine in the land tomorrow, speaking especially to the younger couples.

But this affluence mentality is also causing many in the church to think all are well off enough to spend first for one project sponsored by the church and then for another, then give regularly to the church treasury. What I have heard throughout my life has been, "If I give as I should to the church every Sunday, I will not have the money for all these extra charities." An overstatement? Perhaps, but why are so many churches of Christ **charging** for so many good works along with demanding the weekly sacrificial free-will offering?

"We have so much money," someone may say, "why not charge nominally for this seminar and that class to free the treasury for other things and increase our ability for good works?" But do all the members of the church really have that much money? Could this not be a subtle way of saying to the less affluent, "We do not need or do not want you to have a part in this?" Our poorer brethren could easily get this idea. And we do have poor brethren.

Why charge at all for these ministries? Cannot the contributions regularly made to the church treasury accomodate these efforts? Or are the speakers and teachers used so exorbitant in their fee requests that extra must be demanded from those who attend their functions? Are materials really that expensive or refreshments that costly?

When one sacrificies for God's work through the church regularly, will he have the extra that is becoming frequently called for to attend this rally, that seminar, or the other workshop? I think not. Seriously, brethren, where does this put the low income saint? I would answer, spiritually handicapped, embarrassed, and ostracized.

One big question we must consider is, Where is the Scriptural authority for the church to charge for any service? Is there a difference between charging for a Bible class and materials and charging for a cake to pay for a Bible class and materials? Or perhaps it is closer to having to go through the money changers to worship at the temple (Luke 19:45-46; John 2:15-16).

Please understand I do not wish to excuse stinginess, or laziness, or discourage all the many good works being accomplished. I want them to continue. But I want us to be sure we are doing everything God's way. Of course private individuals may buy or sell whatever services they choose either personally or collectively and do whatever they choose with the money (Acts 5:4; Matt. 20:15). But the church is to maintain apostolic purity in every sense. She, that body of believers working as a unit under the Lordship of Jesus Christ for His Name's sake, must follow the sufficient pattern given her in the New Testament. This will enable her to abound in every good work (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Finally, Christians should be expected to adequately pay for tools and services rendered in a good work as ability allows (Gal. 6:6). But if this cannot be done through the treasury, some way needs to be expedited that does not bog down the church in financial entanglements that discriminate against the poor disciple (Acts 20:35; Gal. 2:10). The key to all of this is to remember the word "gift" (2 Cor. 8:4, 19-20; 9:5, 7, 9, 15). We must keep the glorious gospel of the grace of God free, at all costs.

Henry L. Fuhry (1915-1986)

Gene E. Rainey, Asheville, NC

Henry Fuhry, a frequent contributor to **Carolina Christian,** passed from this life on May 28, 1986. It was my honor to officiate at his funeral service at which his many friends paid their last respects.

Henry led a very fruitful life in which writing was but one of many activities. He was born in Texas City, Texas, on January 19, 1915. His family moved to Jeffersonville, Indiana, when he was four. He graduated from high school there and joined the Army Air Force on March 5, 1936. While in the armed services, he met and married his wife, Hylon, who survives him along with their son.

Henry served his country for almost two years overseas during World War II. When the conflict ended, he joined the Veterans Administration in 1947. That year is noteworthy in Henry's life because he was born again, putting on Jesus in baptism in August 1947. He immediately began a life of teaching and church-building.

While in Louisville, Kentucky, Henry taught Sunday School classes at the Taylor Boulevard congregation as well as a congregation in his hometown of Jefferson, Indiana. In August 1954, the Veterans Administration transferred him to Waukesha, Wisconsin, where the Fuhrys helped to establish the church during the few months that they were there. In 1955, he was transferred to Dayton, Ohio, where he also taught Sunday morning Bible classes.

In 1964, the Fuhrys moved to Asheville, North Carolina, and since then Henry taught classes, preached occasionally at five congregations in the area: East Chestnut and Biltmore in Asheville, Waynesville, Hickory and Cherokee. He also was appointed a deacon in the East Chestnut congregation. Among other responsibilities, Henry was on the board of directors of Blue Ridge Encampment and the Blue Ridge Academy. He was publicity director for the Blue Ridge Encampment. He was active in various civic organizations and was much in demand as a speaker before many groups.

In his profession, Henry rose to the top. He was a graduate of the School of Aviation Medicine, School of Hospital Administration and the Industrial College of the Armed Air Forces. He took specialized courses at Indiana and Dayton universities. At his retirement, he was the Chief of Medical Administration at the Veterans Hospital.

Throughout his lifetime, Henry occupied very visible positions in the community with the United Way, Employment for the Handicapped, and the Buncombe County Mental Health Association. Henry headed the Mayor's Committee on employing the handicapped. I was a member of the Asheville City Council at that time, and I can say that no one had contributed more in this area before Henry and no one has done as much since he left that position.

He retired from the Veterans Administration May 5, 1972, after 37 years of government service. With time on his hands, he and I chatted about writing articles. His writings possessed a straightforwardness and clarity that would make his articles of interest to Christians. Henry was quite humble about his efforts. He often told me during those days, "But there is nothing new in what I write." My reply was that writers seldom generate totally new ideas; besides, the old truths need to be recomfirmed in a fresh and interesting way to new generations. I urged him to avoid the long discourses and to concentrate on shorter, hard-hitting articles that were either devotional material or focused subjects that members could study in one sitting. Over the years, he perfected his technique very well, as his articles in **Carolina Christian** illustrate. The Biltmore bulletin also carried his articles once a month.

Henry was, indeed, an unusual man of many talents. He was a "doer of the word." His efficiency was amazing; he knew how to get things done. He never participated in church controversy. He served when and where he was asked. And in his last years, he projected his ideas with his typewriter into the minds of countless readers whom he never met and who join me in honoring his name this last time on this earth.

Henry Fuhry — as are the rest of us — was a pilgrim passing through this world. He did what he could to improve it, but he especially looked forward to that better place described in Hebrews 11:16.

Energy to Obey

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

He did it! Pete Rose broke Ty Cobb's longstanding and respectable hitting record by accumulating more career hits than anyone else. It took him over 20 years, but he did it. How? Pete is known as a hustler; he is one who puts a lot of energy into what he is doing. He had the goal and the task in his mind, worked hard to achieve it, and stayed with it. He did not forget it and he did not let up from it.

To follow Christ in life, we cannot loose sight of Him or back down from the challenge of this task. Christ commands that it is "all or nothing" (Luke 9:23-25). As we meditate on these Scriptures, let us consider some characteristics of a believer who puts energy into their life of obedience.

We will have a spirit for obedience. Our Christian pursuits will absorb our thoughts. We will not yawn our way through life because we have something worth living for. It is our love for God (Matt. 22:37).

We will have a care for obedience. Our desire to please God will not take a back seat to the interests of the world. We want to follow Christ and not the crowd (Joshua 24:14-15).

We will have a sense for obedience. Our response to the situations and people of our lives will be decisive, right, and fruitful. We will be clear-headed and we will know what to do (John 8:31-32).

All of this is about faithfulness, being loyal to our Lord and Savior. It is a challenge to follow Him everyday in a world that will not. Yet, we cannot make too much of that. God, by His grace and truth will give us the spirit to live and live the obedient life faithfully (1 Tim. 1:7). We face struggles. Temptation dogs our heels. Yet, we can make it! Just dig in and go a little harder.

Do We Have All the Truth?

Alvin C. Bullington, Lenoir, NC

Jesus told the apostles that the Father would send the Holy Spirit after He had gone away and the Spirit would guide them into **all** truth (John 14:25-26; 16:7, 13). Paul tells us that these inspired Scriptures furnish us completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Peter says, "His divine power hath granted unto us **all things** that pertain unto life and godliness." (2 Pet. 1:3.) From these Scriptures it should be evident that **all the truth** has been given to man by the Lord.

In order to have all the truth in our lives, we must first understand it. Is this possible? Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, "Whereby when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ." (Eph. 3:4.) Again, Paul prayed that the Colossians might be filled with the knowledge of his will in **all** spiritual wisdom and understanding (Col. 1:9). Do the above verses refer to all of the truth or just part of it? If just part of it, which part? Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.) The Psalmist said, "The sum of thy word is truth." (Ps. 119:160.) It takes the total amount to add up to all the truth.

All the truth has been revealed to man and man **can** understand it all, that is, all that pertains to his salvation. How can some say, "We will never have all the truth," unless they are referring to those secret things which God has chosen not to reveal to us (Deut. 29:29), which have nothing to do with our salvation? John said, "And hereby we know that we know him (saved) if we keep his commandments." (1 John 2:3.) Does this refer to all or only part of them? The answer should be obvious to everyone!

Denominational churches have some truth. Some more than others. But some truth is not enough. We must speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11). To do this we must speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos the way of God more accurately about baptism because he did not have all the truth on the subject (Acts

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18:14-26). Many sincere, honest, religious people will find themselves lost at the judgment because they followed part truth and part error in this life (Matt. 7:21-23).

We must have **all** the truth on the plan of salvation (Acts 2:38, 41, 47), the way of worship (John 4:24), Christian duty (James 1:27), morality (Titus 2:11-12) and **all** things that pertain to the Christian life. The church at Ephesus had all the truth because Paul had taught it all to them. He said to the Ephesian elders, "Wherefore, I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God." (Acts 20:26-27.) He then told the elders to feed the flock what he had taught them (Acts 20:28). God has revealed to us all truth, we can understand all truth and we must obey all truth. All truth is obtained by a diligent study of the word of God (2 Tim. 2:15).

Kindling

David Hooks, Rockingham, NC

How many of us at one time or another have enjoyed sitting by a fireplace and being warmed and being overcome or captivated by the beauty of such a fire? When we build a fire to warm our houses we always concern ourselves with finding the best hardwood available. We like the larger blocks of wood for longer burning. Optimal heat production and longest burning time impress us. But very seldom do we appreciate the value of the kindling. The kindling is what is used to start the fire. Kindling is used to get the fire hot enough to cause the other wood to produce the maximum results.

When you're sitting by a fire enjoying its warmth and beauty how often have you stared into it and become entrigued by the staggering flow of the flames and the colors of beauty that cause you to become entranced? While you sit enjoying the fire and deep in thought, how often do you think of the kindling that was responsible for creating that fire? I think we can all agree that too often we tend to overlook the kindling and its basic value. We simply do not give the kindling its due credit.

Just so when we consider the church today (and its work) we tend to be more concerned with the fire than we are with the kindling. But as is true with the fire in our fireplaces, the church is only as beautiful as its kindling will produce.

Let's review together some famous and remarkable events in the Bible, and see how often we overlook and underestimate the kindling that made the events possible. Then we'll see how we as servants of Christ today often tend to do the same thing in our service.

In Genesis 24 can be found a good example of how kindling in God's providence often goes overlooked. Abraham was old and wanted to be sure his son Isaac found the proper wife. Isaac was the son of promise, through whom God had promised Abraham a great nation, more numerous than the stars of the sky or the sands on the seashore. As Isaac was the son through whom's seed all the nations of earth were to be blessed. In other words, through Isaac's seed the Messiah would come.

We readily recognize the names of the famous people of God such as Abraham, Isaac, and Rebecca as soon as we hear them. We were taught of these people from our Bible classes as children, and their importance in God's providence; but how many of us are familiar with a character named Eliezer? The name Eli'ezer means "God is Help." This man was a servant of Abraham. He was sent to find a wife for Isaac from his own kindred. How often do we think about the importance of this man of kindling? How great and important was his faithfulness to his master and to the task given him.

God in His providence uses the "little people." The perfect lineage of the Christ depended on the mating of Isaac, the son of promise. There would have been no Israelite nation had Isaac and Rebecca not had a child named Jacob who later became Israel. Yet Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, was the kindling that lit the fire between Isaac and Rebecca. Take this portion out and the entire story falls.

A second example of kindling can be found in 2 Kings 5. This is one of my favorite stories of the Bible and I realize that these have been presented for our learning and admonition. There are so many of the basic essential principles of Godly wisdom taught here that this story reeks with power for them that will hear. This story is of Naaman, the great prophet Elisha, the command to dip seven times in the Jordan River, and the promise of healing. We learn the great lesson of absolute obedience to God if we expect the gifts and blessings of God. But where is the kindling? A Hebrew maiden who told Naaman's wife of the great prophet and the power to heal. Take her portion out of the story and Naaman does not hear about Elisha and is not healed. She was the kindling that lit the fire under Naaman that caused him to burn with the desire to go to Elisha! Like a drowning man grasping for a straw, Naaman's life was filled with hope, and his passion burned with eagerness to travel! Even then it still took more kindling in the form of Naaman's servants on the road back home to cause him to obey Elisha's command or else return home a leper even though he knew how to be healed. How often do we give them their just recognition? How often do we teach from this example the power of brotherly love, unity, brotherly influence and encouragement? We do tend to overlook the kindling don't we?

The great apostle Peter will always be remembered from our pulpits and class rooms for his wonderful sermon on Pentecost. How he convicted many in that audience of their individual guilt in murdering the Son of God and commanded them to repent and be baptized if they were to receive God's grace in the forgiving of their sins. Also the role he played when God chose to introduce the Jews to the fact that the Gentiles were to be equally accepted with them into the family of God. How great this man's memory in the minds of all students of God's precious words and yet we seldom see the full impact of the kindling power of a mere chicken in his powerful life. On that famous night of betrayal the crowing of this rooster convicted the apostle of his unfaithfulness and caused him to burn towards repentance! Isn't it amazing how this great, powerful, proclaimer of the gospel is kept in check by the memory of this chicken? Every time he was to grow weak or weary from the battle scars, the memory of this rooster would kindle the fires again! The Lord truly does work in mysterious ways.

Now let's apply all this to our lives today as we see ourselves as tools of God in His providence. I believe we need to come down in our attitudes; or as brother Marshall Keeble used to say, "Back up, and look ahead at yourself."

Do we desire to be a fire of beauty and warmth for the church? If so, we need to remember that a fire is only as good as its kindling! Whether we be elders or preachers, or deacons, or Bible class teachers, or any other type servant of the cross, we should always remember where we came from and who we are. Peter was made to realize, by the crowing of the rooster, that he could not stand except on the faith he had in Jesus. He could not be a faithful servant except to the extent he did so on faith, and not of his own power or ability.

We need to remember the kindling and the examples thereof that our Lord gives us in His teachings. This is the kindling that makes us a fire unto the Lord (He of course being our chief example of kindling) and a fire of warmth, and a fire of light to the world.

Let's direct what our Lord teaches us of kindling to our leadership in the church. Jesus said if we desire to be great in the

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kingdom of God, we must become the least (Matt. 20:25-28). If we wish to become the greatest we must become servant of all. This is greatness in the eyes of our Saviour, and we must be careful that in becoming elders, preachers and deacons, we maintain and develop the kindling qualities and our greatness continues and even progresses.

Elders, deacons and preachers, if they are to be pleasing to God, must serve His people. Whatever the need of the congregation, these officers have a great responsibility. We are not supposed to stop serving the congregation when we assume these positions but we are to be examples of servants or leaders in service. Elders, for example, are to be shepherds of the flock. Shepherds in the Orient did not get behind their sheep with whips and drive them to their destination but they got out in front of their sheep and led them. This is what the Church is starving for today; leaders who become servants and will take a stand in front of the flock and be examples of true leaders. Jesus said He is the Chief Shepherd or example of leadership. He never resorted to merely telling His sheep what to do or how to live, He showed them. Jesus said, "I call My sheep by name and they hear My voice and **follow** Me."

Leaders should follow Jesus as supreme example. The reason Jesus washed the disciples feet on the night of His betrayal was because He had a situation where a group of leaders were all standing around wandering who would perform the duties of a servant? Jesus bent down and washed all their feet, simply showing that the greatest among them was their servant. They remind me of firewood just looking for some kindling to ignite. What kindling this could be to those who would open their eyes and see!

Just here I would like to make a challenge to all leaders. Let's all lead by serving and not by coaching! Let's not say, "Do as I say and not as I do." Let's say, "Watch me do, and be ye followers of me even as I am also of Christ Jesus."

A man can go to the books of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus and examine them carefully to learn the qualifications of deacons and elders, but if he lacks the basic qualities of kindling or does not possess a basic understanding of Christian stewardship, he still is not qualified to hold either office. You still need to be good kindling and not be haughty or highminded of yourself.

When leaders get up and teach us the necessity of visiting those weaker members, or the sick, or back-sliders, and yet they themselves are not examples, or when they do not practice what they preach, they can not expect to set others on fire to do these things. Sometimes it seems that such leaders forget they are Christians first.

My petition today is for those of us who consider ourselves as leaders to work hard, not at being big officials in the church lording authority over others, but at becoming good kindling, so we can light the fire of real Christianity in its pure and undefiled glory!

If you are a Christian and do not consider yourself a leader, why not? Christians are all leaders! You are either leading people closer to or farther away from Christ! You do not have to teach a class or preach, or be an elder or deacon to be a leader. All you have to do is live as much like Christ as you can learn of Him and you will lead someone to Him.

The purpose of Jesus coming into the world in a fleshly robe was to redeem mankind and that each such saved person will permit Him to use Him as kindling to light fires of service that will produce pure fruit that will save the world!

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Forgiveness of Sins

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

Introduction. When Alexander Pope said, "To err is human, to forgive, divine," he was not engaged in the idle use of words. Forgiveness is an attribute of God; and only those who have been forgiven are in position to understand and appreciate its meaning, and to manifest the spirit of forgiveness toward others. Not only is the term forgiveness the tenderest and most beautiful word in our language; it is also very far reaching in its consequences. This is true because it has to do with human relations which involve the destiny of the soul. Jesus plainly says that God will not forgive the trespasses of those who are unwilling to forgive their fellowman. An unforgiving person, of course, cannot be saved, it matters not what else he may do in the way of observing that which God has commanded (see James 2:10-11; 4:17). There is no lesson that we can study which needs more emphasis than this one. The forgiveness of sins is the very heart of the gospel of Christ.

The Need for Forgiveness

Judging from the attitude of many professing Christians, it seems that they do not consider themselves within the range of either the interest or the scope of this subject. So often when we think of sin we have in the background of our minds such gross iniquities as murder, robbery, adultery, drunkenness and the like. These things, indeed, are sin; but before anyone tries to avoid his share in the need of forgiveness, let him endeavor to see if there might not be other categories of sin which should be added to this carnal list. What about the sins of temperament — sullenness, vindictiveness, peevishness, jealousy, bad temper, and so on? These sins are much more prevalent among professing Christians than those listed; and who is willing to deny that they do much more harm? For example, the sins of the two brothers in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-33). The younger brother represents the gross sins of passion — adultry, drunkenness, and the like. These sins are ruinous in their character, but the one who was guilty of them repented and came back to his father. The elder son represents the sins of temper. Instead of rejoicing at his brother's return, "he was angry, and would not go in." He remained deaf to his father's entreaties, and in the eyes of Jesus he was more hopeless than his brother who was guilty of the sins of passion. What about the sins of social attitude — making money, for example? A man with a desire to make money can often be friendly enough with individuals, while at the same time enforcing hard practices through his business or organization which does more harm, works more misery, ruins more families over a wider area, than he, by his individual friendliness, can ever make up for (1 Tim. 6:10). Then there is the sin of neglect (Heb. 2:1-3). Other types of sin could be mentioned, but this should suffice to show that all men have a share in the need of the gospel of forgiveness.

Forgiveness Is Not Easy

Forgiveness is not easy because of the effect that sin has on the one who must forgive. This is true if one takes sin seriously, instead of merely condoning it. People whose sins effect others should remember this principle. It is easy to ruin one for life by a word or deed which leaves the wrong impression. It is serious not to represent any one correctly.

> *"Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;*
> *'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;*
> *But he that filches from me my good name*
> *Robs me of that which not enriches him*
> *And makes me poor indeed."*
>
> **Shakespeare**

It is hard to forgive because of the terrific experience through which the man who is forgiven must pass. When one can say light-heartedly that it is a glorious thing to be forgiven, it is fairly certain that he has never been forgiven and does not know the meaning of forgiveness. To do someone a wrong, to be alienated from him, to be ashamed of one's self, and then by free and full forgiveness to be restored to the old friendship and trusted again, is one of the most humilating experiences that a proud man can endure. No wonder that men will do almost anything to escape their guilt, rather than confess and ask for forgiveness. Indeed, it has never been easy for men to believe that they needed forgiveness, or to ask for it when once they were convinced of their need. It is much easier for us to try to pour our sins on someone else and try to blame him for what we do. But this is a responsibility that the offender cannot escape (see Matt. 5:23-26). The Christian, further, also has the responsibility to correct the difference and seek out the person who has committed the sin against the Christian and to correct the problem peacefully (Matt. 18:15). Someone has said that a religion, the very essence of which is love, cannot suffer at its altar a heart that is revengeful and uncharitable, and which does not use its utmost endeavor to revive love in the heart of another. Because of the sacrifice that God had to make in order to forgive, in human language, it required the very heart of God (John 3:16). The Lord's death on the cross was the most ignominious and involved the greatest suffering that has ever been known on the earth. God never condones sin, He forgives; and a cross is always at the center of it. No man is ever done with his sins until they have forgiven. Either one's sins have been forgiven, or he is still in sin; and that is about the most solemn fact in human experience. Time does not erase sin and no amount of self-justification or trying to blame one's sins on someone else, will ever take them away.

What Is Forgiveness?

To pardon is to free one from punishment due for an offense, or to refrain from exacting punishment. To forgive is to give up, not only any claim for requital or retribution, but also any resentment or desire for revenge. Pardon has reference to consequences, while forgiveness has reference to feelings. An executive may pardon, but forgiveness must come from the one who has suffered the wrong. God, of course, both pardons and forgives. The pardoned sinner is exempt from punishment; the forgiven sinner is restored to divine favor. Pardon is the act of a superior, implying the right to punish; forgiveness is the privilege of the humblest person who has been wronged or offended. Humanity knows in a general way what forgiveness is; but Christianity alone has any idea about the special kind of forgiveness which the New Testament requires — a forgiveness which is also a giving. When one forgives another he treats him as if the offense had never been committed. Jesus leaves no place for the feeling of revenge. This kind of forgiveness comes at a great sacrifice. It demands a cross. The one who extends it must suffer; and only a strong character is able to go through with it. This is a place where one may measure himself with the Lord. Suppose a man should become unfaithful to his marriage vow, and then in penitence should ask his wife to forgive him; and then suppose that she should simply say, "Oh, forget it; it doesn't amount to anything — that wouldn't solve the problem." It would simply mean that she did not care. The feeling of forgiveness would not be there. A true-hearted woman would go further than that. She would demonstrate two things: first, a love that is great enough to forgive; second, a righteous character that would be wounded and crushed by the wrong done — an integrity that would require a tremendous sacrifice to forgive. This is the kind of person who can

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forgive in the New Testament way; and when that is done no feeling is cherished which would be glad for something to develop later which would give sufficient cause to condemn the former offender (see Luke 17:3-4; Matt. 18:21-35).

The Art of Forgiveness

The first step in this gentle art is a true passion for friendship which will never be satisfied until one has turned each enemy or estranged person into a friend. This is directly opposed to the passion of hatred, or the desire for revenge. It is akin to the "Love that will not let me go." This passion of love has been described as "the joy of an aggressive spirit of forgiveness." To heal the wounds of friendship, bind up the spirit of the broken-hearted, and transform hatred and indifference into attachment and love — is this not the spirit of Christ? We should see the sins of those who injure us as they themselves ought to see them. Christ took the sins of others upon Himself and did everything He could, including His death, to bring them to repentance. If we are to forgive as God does, that must be our spirit toward those who have wronged us. We must feel the shame of their sins, as well as our own; we must sorrow over them, not only because we have suffered but also because they have done wrong. If we are to follow God's example, we must grieve over the sins of those who have wronged us almost as though they were our own sins. This spirit led God to give His Son to die for those who had wronged Him (Rom. 9:1-3). All of the loving energies of our spirit must be brought to bear upon the offender, in order that he may be brought to see and share in this attitude toward his sin, not with a view of triumphing over him in self-righteousness, but that he himself may be reconciled in the true spirit of repentance in an atmosphere of love. It is here that we partake of divine love and pity, which in a sorrow that has joy in its heart seeks to win back the soul into the restored. Thus in pursuing this noble art of forgiveness we climb the last height from which we see into the profoundest depths of this great Christian act of forgiving love, and enter into partnership with the forgiving Father, the atoning Son, and with the Spirit that does ever make intercession for us.

"Being People of the Book"

John Risse, Charlotte, NC

There is an old joke told about a scene that once happened in a Dallas courtroom concerning a member of the church of Christ. The judge told the bailiff to swear in the first witness of a trial case. The bailiff promptly informed the judge that someone had stolen the courtroom Bible. The judge then asked if there were any members of the church of Christ in the courtroom. Upon seeing one man stand, the judge instructed the bailiff to escort him to the witness stand. After arriving, the judge told the bailiff to instruct the witness to lay his hand upon the head of the member of the church and swear an oath. The judges' reasoning was that, "those people know more Bible than anyone I've ever known!"

It is so sad that in many places today, within the churches of Christ, that the statement of confidence concerning Bible knowledge can no longer be made. Perhaps, one of the reasons this is true today is because of the incessant argument over versions. It appears to this writer that there seems to be absolutely no middle ground when it comes to which translation of the scriptures one reads. One is targeted either "liberal or conservative," I have really never heard these terms adequately defined, by which translation he or she uses. Extreme articles advocating either the KJV or the NIV appear to do a great deal more harm than good.

Advocates of modern versions refer to the antiquated language, style, and demeanor of the KJV, while older version supporters throw around terms like irreverent, loose, and uncertain sound. It appears, from my humble perspective, both sides have gone to the point of gross exaggeration in attempting to "prove" their point. On the side of the NIV one writer recently stated that the KJV has "outlived its era of readability!" This argument is quickly disposed of by the sheer numbers of KJV Bibles sold each year. On the other hand, a recent KJV polemic stated that the NIV (unfortunately called a paraphrase) was full of "blunders, mistranslations, and deletions." His argument was then supported by the NIV's leaving out of the words Christ and blood in many mentioned passages. This argument is unfortunate because, without exception, the words that supposedly are deleted by the NIV **are not** even in the Greek text (Nestle 26th).

Is there ever to be an answer? Is there any "right translation"? Yes, in fact there are some rules to follow in deciding which is the correct translation for you:

1. Choose a committee translation. This will eliminate the bias of one man superseding the actual words of God and therefore eliminates paraphrases (1 Cor. 4:6, KJV).

2. Choose a translation that you will read and study. A Bible has no power until it is sown and grown in the hearts of men (2 Tim. 2:15, NASB).

3. Choose a translation that is used by the people in your neighborhood or who you work with. A major purpose of Bible study is to introduce Jesus to those around you and assist them in finding truth (Philem. 6, NIV).

The six major translations of the Bible that are committee translations, not paraphrases, and are not done by individuals are:

1. King James Version, 1611.
2. American Standard Version, 1901.
3. Revised Standard Version, 1946.
4. New American Standard Bible, 1959.
5. New International Version, 1973.
6. New King James Version, 1979.

Brethren, let's return to the days of wrestling with Scripture and incorporating it as part of our hearts. Let's do that instead of wasting precious time, space, and energy while solving nothing, causing division, edifying no one, and surely disappointing, our Lord.

Air Conditioning and Assemblies

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

I have been thinking a lot about air conditioning lately. Like a lot of other things, it is something we probably do not appreciate as much as we should until something happens and we do not have it anymore. But what I have been thinking about lately are the ways that air conditioning is like the fellowship we enjoy when we come together. Consider the following parallels.

Both are refreshing. That is really an understatement! Is there anything more physically refreshing that going into an air-conditioned room after being out in the 90-100 degree heat? And meeting together with brothers and sisters in Christ is like a breath of fresh air. Paul expressed his desire to be with the Christians at Rome "and find refreshing rest in your company" (Rom. 15:32). Likewise, the spirit of Titus found refreshment through a visit with the Corinthian brethren (2 Cor. 7:13). No doubt about it, our meeting together is "the pause that refreshes!"

Both stir things up. Turn on the air conditioning and you are sure to get rid of that stale air. The Hebrew writer tells us that with respect to our meeting together we should "consider how we may spur one another on to love and good works" (10:24). Regular attendance at such assemblies is a sure antidote for apathy.

Finally, both can have these desired results only when our part is done. An air conditioner sitting in a box helps no one. It provides no refreshment. It circulates no air.

It must be taken out of the box and properly installed. So it is also with the Christian and the assembly. The assembly does nothing for the unassembled. The saint who stays away from the assembly robs himself of refreshment and encouragement. He must show up if he wants to be stirred up.

Air conditioners and assemblies. Life can be uncomfortable without air conditioning. But would it not be unbearable without the assembly of the saints?

The Goal

Let me be a candle burning,
Giving of myself to glow;
Or an autumn leaf to glory turning,
Making way for buds to grow.
Let me lose myself in giving,
Become reflection of God's love —
Let me feel His Spirit living —
Lift my eyes to worlds above.

Debra Figgins Griffin
Spartanburg, SC

* * *

Moving the Cornerstone

L. Roger Powell, Waynesboro, VA

When I was a boy growing up out in the country we had a neighbor who evidently thought his little piece of real estate should grow larger each day. He had worn a path from moving the cornerstones around. Most of the neighbors ignored it until he began demanding fences be moved, or forbidding certain trees from being cut. Every few years he would demand the boundaries be surveyed. The surveyor would come, corners would be established, and boundaries marked; but invariably before a week had passed he would be out again moving the markers. He was mentally retarded and probably did not know any better.

In the Mosaic law, God commanded Israel, saying, "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark." (Deut. 19:14.) When Israel made conquest of Canaan the land was divided among tribes and families, and like the law itself, this possession of a specific piece of property was designed to help preserve the identity of Abraham's descendants until such time as Old Testament promises and prophecies were fulfilled in the coming of Christ, and the giving of the New Covenant.

It is a disgrace that families, friends, and neighbors are so woefully divided religiously; husbands and wives, children and parents. Within one city block there are often as many as a dozen or more different churches represented, yet each claiming to be followers of Christ. It is as contrary to the teachings of God's word as a matter could possibly be. Why does it exist? Simply because men have moved the ancient landmarks whereupon unity, harmony, and peace among Christians are built.

The plea of the churches of Christ is to go back to the Bible, do Bible things in Bible ways, and call Bible things by Bible names. It really does not matter what you and I think and believe, nor what our ancestors thought, said, or did, nor what the church officers think and believe. What really matters is what the Bible itself says or teaches. What do the Scriptures say about the church? About what one must do to be saved? About marriage and divorce? About the Holy Spirit? About the sanctity of life? Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6.) Wouldn't it be great if folks would lay aside their denominational doctrines of human origin, and accept nothing but Jesus and His revealed truth as the landmark (or standard) for all religious belief and practice? And wouldn't it be wonderful if no one tried to move that cornerstone?

A Book Review

Michael R. Mobley, Mooresville, NC

Studies in Judges. John L. Kachekman, Jr.; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 163 pages, paper $5.50.

In a society that has chosen "taking care of number one!" as its philosphy of life, the studies of this book are desperately needed. Its theme is "The Love and Discipline of God" and its text is the book of **Judges**, an Old Testament book often ignored. Through this study, you will discover the glorious nature of God and expose the sin in us that causes us to fail before God. You will also discover the root of this world's wickedness. Of the 12 lessons you will find such titles as: "A Scrutiny of God," "An Erring Philosophy," "Ehud — A Man Just Like You!" and "Jephthah — When One Slip-Up Ruins It All!" In ten of these lessons there are six sections: Introduction, Historical Perspective, Devotional Perspective, Practical Perspective, Drawing It All Together, and Reflections and Resolutions. As has become the author's trademark, the book contains 92 "Short Sketches" from Judges for preaching, teaching, devotionals, or further personal study. The author views no part of the book of Judges as dull or unimportant and neither is this book. An excellent piece of work! We highly recommend it. A special note. The author has assigned the royalties of this book to Freed-Hardeman College. When you buy it, you not only help your own Christian education, but also those of many others.

Reach for Your Spiritual Potential, Doris Black; Quality Publications, P.O. Box 1060, Abilene, TX 79604; 107 pages, paper $4.95.

The nature of the Christian is the individual's faithful service or living devoted to God. This book is an effort to study how we can reach spiritual potential. It deals with the kind of person we are, our need for Bible study and prayer, our responsibility, and practical daily living. You will find such titles as: "God's Vision for Us." "Recognize and Treat Spiritual Malnutrition," "Discover Your Talents and Your Ministry," and "The Spirit's Ministries for God's Children." It is divided into seven sections for a total of 13 lessons with each lesson containing a set of discussion questions. It is designed for ladies classes, retreats, seminars, and personal study.

What the Bible Says About Self-Esteem. Bruce Parmenter; College Press Publishing Company, P.O. Box 1132, Joplin, MO 64802; 376 pages, hardbound $13.95.

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Offer not valid in California.

The various teachings in our world of one's attitude towards himself, self-esteem, are basically humanistic or atheistic. Therefore, by them one would have a warped attitude toward life, others, God, and himself. With this book, the author seeks to teach the Christian persective on these things by giving what he believes to be the Biblical attitude toward one's self. His basis is that "we are not the final word on ourselves." This book is a collection of brief meditations, 134 of them, on spirituality and one's overall health. Each article begins with the Scripture being considered and closes with a memory verse. It considers a healthy relationship with God for a healthy understanding of ourselves and a healthy relationship with others around us. One major impression the reader gets is the dignity, honor, and hope of the Christian life. As the book carries its reader from Genesis to Revelation, he will find much enjoyable reading. It is designed for personal study.

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

China Bible Project

Durant, Okla. In recent months more than $500,000 has been raised from U.S. and international Christians for the Campaign for the Chinese Billions project. The money will be used to finance the publishing of a parallel style Chinese-English Bible.

Christian Lepers

Suvarthepeta, India. About ten years ago twelve lepers responded to the preaching of the gospel in the Indian town of Kakinada. Sometime later a church building was constructed a few miles from the town, and now about 65 lepers live and worship together in the all-Christian, all-leprous village of Suvarthepeta. A whole village sprung up after the construction of the building. Since the new village had no name, the people called it Suvarthepeta, which means "where the gospel is."

In India lepers are not allowed to work, so they must support themselves by begging. The Tiffin Road church of Christ in Findlay, Ohio, sends the lepers $35.00 a month, which provides them with some security and better rice.

Target Nairobi

Abilene, Texas. According to **Target Nairobi** magazine (Vol. 1, No. 6), $850,000 of the needed $1 million has been raised for the Target Nairobi project. The church in Nairobi had been offered a piece of prime property in the city. If the money could not be raised in time, the property would be offered to another religious group. It now appears, however, that the goal will be easily surpassed. Construction on the church building is nearly at the halfway mark and construction on the first phase of the Christian vocational school was to have begun in July.

Until Target Nairobi, the churches of Christ had never raised a million dollars in cash exclusively for a single mission project.

News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte. Dick Beasley, elder at Providence Road, passed away on August 14. Before entering secular work brother Beasley had served as full-time preacher in several places, including Columbia, South Carolina.

Charlotte. John Waddey will preach at Westside October 17-19.

Thomasville. The Jericho, Mocksville congregation has announced plans to assist the work at Thomasville. A preacher is now located at Thomasville, being supported also by Brentwood Hills, Nashville, and Brooks Avenue, Raleigh. There are about twenty members. Land has been purchased for a building.

Mocksville. North Main church has secured Robert Ball to serve as preaching minister. His wife is Charleen and they have two daughters. The Balls moved from Decateur, Alabama.

Bryson City. The following report is taken from the Jericho, Mocksville bulletin and was written by Bill Ijames.

"The work at Bryson City by our former preacher, Harding Lowry, although slow, has been progressing well in the two plus years Harding has been there. The attendence for this time of year has increased from 34-40 on Sunday morning to 58-62 on Sunday morning. The increase is due to local people. At Bryson City since May 1984, there have been nine restorations and eight baptisms. There were three baptisms from among the "established families" a couple of weeks ago. Harding and Margaret continue working unbelievable hours for the Lord and the results are now being shown in Bryson City.

"There are several ways that we of the Jericho congregation can help this good work. One is by our visiting Harding and Margaret. A second way is by our prayers. A third way is monetarily. Over the last few months, the congregation near Chattanooga that supports Harding has cut out the work fund the congregation was receiving. The work fund is for education materials, tracts, correspondence courses and other supplies of that nature. We individually can help in resupplying this fund. Also the congregation has a fund to purchase a van to bring people to worship services. A van would cost about $15,000 or more. A van could be put to great use in the mountain area where many people do not have transportation to get to services.

"The men of the business meeting at Jericho have decided to offer the opportunity to the members at Jericho to aid this work individually, if they so desire. If you want to help concerning Bryson City, see Bill Ijames. If you make out checks for this work make them to Bryson City Church of Christ and mark them either for 'work fund' or 'van fund.' "

Lexington. The congregation is seeking a full-time man to work with the present minister, Clifford Shaver.

NC Conversions:

South Fork, Winston Salem, 2; Cary, 1; Linville Forest, Kernersville, 3; Highpoint, 1; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 5; Mooresville, 2; Asheboro, 1; Hendersonville, 3; Providence Road, Charlotte, 3; Archdale, Charlotte, 1; Westside, Charlotte, 1; Jericho, Mocksville, 2; Gastonia, 3; Wilson, 1; Pine Valley, Wilmington, 1. Total: 33.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Spartanburg. Charles Blackburn and family have left Central to move to Chicago. Charles served as one of the elders and his wife, Laurel, was church secretary for several years.

Albert Gardner has announced plans for work in a campaign in India November 3-December 11.

Columbia. Five additional deacons have been added at St. Andrews Road. They are Mike Witte, Robert Moore, Bill Higginbotham, Frank Patrick, and John Newton.

SC Conversions:

Edgewood, Greenville, 1; Northeast, Greenville, 1; Myrtle Beach, 2; Central, Spartanburg, 1; By-Pass, Union, 2; Summerville, 3; Winnsboro, 2; St. Andrews Road, Columbia, 1; Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, 1. Total: 14.

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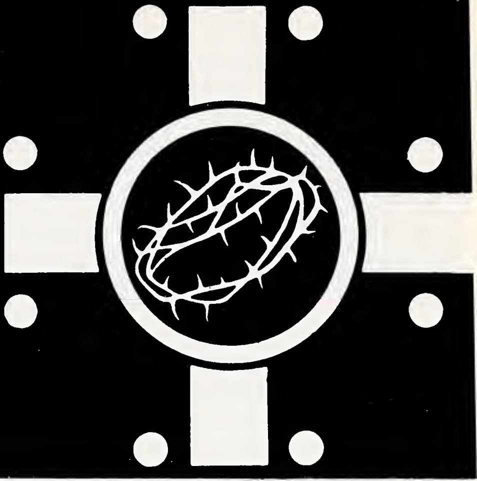

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THE
SOUTH CAROLINA
LECTURES

MYRTLE BEACH, SC

NOVEMBER 11-14

See Pages 10 & 11

editorial

THE MAN AND HIS PLAN

For some strange reason non-spiritual men despise the very thought of being bound to obey that which is taught in the holy Scriptures. They come up with all kinds of schemes and theories to minimize or nullify their responsibility to obey God's commands to them — they simply cannot endure the word duty. One such effort to free man from any obligation to adhere to that which is written centers around the concept that we are to preach Christ as the Savior apart from any word or plan revealed in the Scriptures. This translates into the concept of preaching Christ the man without preaching His plan. But such is an absolute impossibility. There is simply no way to preach Christ without preaching what the Scriptures say about Him: for everything we know about Him is contained in the Scriptures. For this reason we must preach the Scriptures in order to preach Christ. There is absolutely no escape from this conclusion for the simple reason that we know nothing about Christ except from the Scriptures. Thus when one preaches Christ (if he preaches the truth about Him) he must preach the Scriptures.

Of course we recognize the fact that Christ is the heart of God's plan to save — the heart of the Scriptures. Without Him there would be no Scriptures, no plan of salvation, no scheme of redemption, no means of being reconciled with God. All should understand this. But on the other hand, without the Scriptures, there would be no knowledge of Christ, of sin, or of the need of salvation. The two are so interwoven that it is impossible to truthfully preach the one without the other. We thus need to understand that Christ has a plan (His gospel) by which He saves (and that both He and the plan are revealed in the gospel). He does not save apart from that plan. One cannot receive the plan without the man nor can he receive the man without the plan. When Christ is truly preached, there must be a balance between the man and the plan. To preach the one without the other would be to preach a gospel other than the gospel of Christ. Some, however, attempt to preach Christ the man without preaching His plan. Others may attempt to preach the plan without proper regards for the man — without seeing Christ as the authority and power of the plan. But to do either is to deprive the lost of God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). To keep this balance, all we must do is to preach Christ as the Savior (the means by which salvation is made possible) and His plan the means by which He saves. We cannot rightly preach the one without the other. To rightly preach the man (Christ) we must preach His plan; to rightly preach the plan we must give priority to the man. That is so simple that we cannot help but marvel at the fact that so many have missed it.

Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16.) This we call the great commission. The authority back of it is Christ. The commission is for the apostles to go preach. The limits or bounds of their preaching was the gospel — no one is

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authorized to preach anything else. When the gospel was preached, those who heard it were to believe and be baptized. Those who so obeyed would be saved. Now how could one preach the Christ who gave the great commission without preaching the great commission He gave? And how could one preach the great commission without preaching "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"? If we preach Christ we must preach the great commission; if we preach the great commission we must preach the terms of salvation it imposes. There is no other way. Thus to preach the gospel (to preach Christ and Him crucified) is to preach both the man and His plan — that is, preach Christ as the man who gave the plan and a sinner as the man who must obey it in order to be saved. Or in the words of Scripture: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:8-9.)

SEEKING SATISFACTION IN MATERIAL THINGS

No long since we finished reading the biography of Willard Collins, retiring President of David Lipscomb College. It is a fascinating book because it tells the life story of a fascinating man. One statement by Collins particularly impressed us because of its far reaching implications. He did his first full-time preaching for the church in Old Hickory, Tennessee. While he was there the church grew rapidly, strong, and influential, both in the local community and around the world. Many years later when he was asked to account for his successful work with the church, he said, among other things, that the people who made up the church "were not middle class people looking for satisfaction in material things."

This statement strikes at the very heart of one of the most serious problems confronting the church today, and it may account, at least in part, for the decline in church growth among us for the past two decades. God has abundently blessed us with material things, far beyond any other people who have ever lived on the earth, and it appears that, for the most part, we have become a middle class people who do seek our satisfaction in them. This should not be interpreted to mean that material things in and of themselves are evil. They are, or should be, a great blessing. God made them for our use, comfort, and enjoyment. But we have a tendency to misuse them (and a misuse of anything is sinful). When we seek satisfaction in them we substitute them for God and the higher values of spirituality. Basically man is both a physical and a spiritual being — the former a temporal and the latter an eternal entity. And while both have needs to be filled, the physical should be used to enhance the spiritual and not **vice versa.** But in modern society the rule by which most seem to live is get all you can at whatever cost to others and then use all you get for selfish comforts and sensual satisfaction. In doing this, we ignore the spiritual part of man (the only realm where true satisfaction can be obtained) and magnify the material. We thus seek satisfaction in the material (which may be taken from us in a moment of time) rather than in the spiritual (which will remain forever).

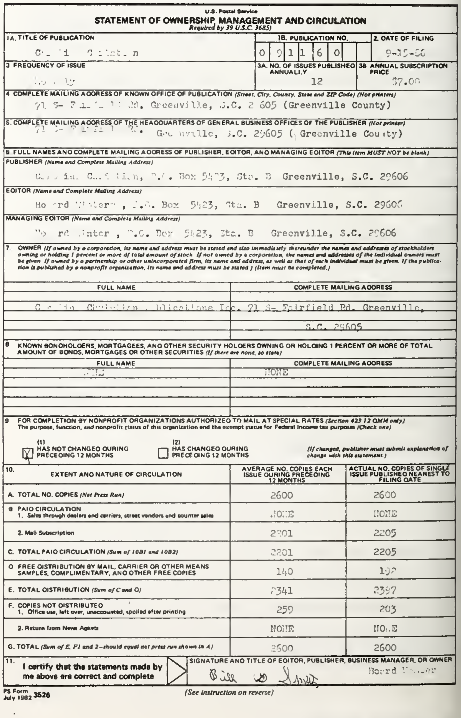
This quest for material things (while neglecting the spiritual) can be seen in many areas of our lives. For example, where do we spend the greater part of our income, on bodily pleasures or spiritual needs? How do we use our talents, to earn more and more in order to buy more and more or to enhance and promote the cause of Christ (the only ultimate good known to this world)? Time is another factor in our stewardship to God. Do we waste time on things and pleasures of this life while neglecting our hearts, minds, and bodies in spiritual improvement? Are we all tied up in self, with its pleasures and problems, while failing to reach out to teach and help others along their way to a better eternity? Which is of greater value in our eyes, a secular or a religious education? (Thank God we can have both, but many, we fear too many, neglect the religious as if only the secular had lasting value.) Would we rather be entertained by television, movies, or a ball game than to gather with the saints to worship and praise God? Do we find it more rewarding personally to read a novel or some other form of worldly literature than to read the Bible or some other constructive religious book?

These are just a few of the many areas where, if we face them with intellectual honesty, it appears that we are seeking satisfaction in material rather than spiritual things. One concluding thought: this is not an indictment against a few individual Christians or even the church as a whole. It is an indictment against our whole society, Christians included. We have all become so materialistic that it is going to be difficult for us to leave this world in order to go to heaven . . . if we are fortunate enough to go! Material things have become more beautiful in our eyes than heaven. We have become so fond of them that heaven has no treasure for us. Instead of singing "Heaven Holds All to Me," we could perhaps more truthfully sing, "Earth Holds All to Me." If you are ready for a shock, turn to and study 1 John 2:15-17 and 2 Peter 1:3-4.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT

Singing the songs of Zion is an inspiration to the saints of God. But the source of the inspiration goes deeper, much deeper, than the singing itself. Singing, true spiritual singing, is a result of what is in the heart. This means that the inspiration of singing is indicative of the joy and hope that permeates the life. It is a joy to sing when singing is an expression of joy. Or as James says, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." (James 5:13.) Thus it is easy to sing when all is going well, when we are happy and blessed and are bubbling over with joy because life has delivered to us many good things . . . and few bad ones. But the real test of Christianity comes when the night of affliction or persecution comes upon us. It is then we must sing, if we sing at all, songs in the night (cf. Job 35:10; Ps. 77:6). Songs in the night are more than an expression of joy: they are sources of comfort and means of encouragement. They show that we believe that the power of God, working in us, will enable us to withstand any device of Satan which he has designed for our destruction. We can overcome as long as we can sing.

As an example of songs in the night, consider Paul and Silas as they lay beaten and bleeding in the inner prison at Philippi. Their only crime was to cast an evil spirit out of a slave girl who brought her masters much gain because she was possessed. To save the girl was to spoil the source of their fortune. But save her Paul and Silas did. And for this act of gracious kindness they were beaten with many stripes and cast into prison. The jailor was charged to keep them with all safety. He thus thrust them into an inner prison and fastened their feet securily in stocks. Here then are two innocent men, unjustly beaten, wrongly cast into prison, unnecessarily secured as the worst of criminals, lying in a cold, filthy, dark dungeon with their beaten bodies bruised and bleeding. If ever there was a time or a place or a people or a circumstance to complain, this was it. But with Paul and Silas the very opposite was true. The Bible says, "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praise unto God: and the prisoners heard them." (Acts 16:25.) How amazing! But read the remainder of the story (Acts 16:26-40) and see how that by their songs in the night they were able to lead the jailor and his household to the saving



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truth of Christ the Lord, how their song in suffering resulted in the salvation of others from eternal suffering. It was not pleasant to have been beaten almost to death and then cast into a dark dungeon and bound as dangerous criminals, but the strength of Paul and Silas came from their internal convictions that God was still in control. They could thus sing, and their song in the night has echoed down through the centuries to remind us that no night is so dark and no prison is so filthy but that the saints of God can lift their voices in song — lift their voice in song to praise their Redeemer for delivering them from a greater evil than all the afflictions this life can ever know, namely, sin and the horrible death it brings.

Our blessed Lord also knew what it meant to sing songs in the night. In the darkest hours of His life, knowing that His time had come and that in a few short hours He would be suffering the terrible agony of the cross, Jesus spent some time privately with His disciples and instituted the Lord's Supper, the divine memorial of His death, and then, as the inspired record says, "When they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives." (Matt. 26:30.) In the shadow of the cross, Jesus sang! This should encourage us to lift our voices in song, regardless of how dark, how dreary, or how depressing the events of life may become. When there are no songs in the night, defeat is all but certain; when there are songs in the night, victory is all but sure.

There Is a Pattern!

J. Terry Wheeler, Duncan, SC

Division is wrong and not to be desired among disciples of Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:10). The Lord said He would put a sword between us and the world (Matt. 10:34-39), but swords are not to come between brethren (Gen. 13:8). Yet the price for peace must never be at the expense of truth (Gal. 2:3-5).

A number of well-meaning brethren, in combatting the divisions that have occurred among churches of Christ within the last hundred years, are saying there is no real pattern to church worship and organization. The focal point is Jesus, they say, and each culture is then allowed the freedom to express Jesus within the workings of the church as they deem best. One has gone so far as to say that the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, and Ephesus were so dissimilar in organization and worship, there are no external distinctives to be deduced and maintained to demonstrate loyalty to Jesus Christ from the New Testament through their examples.

Are they right? Is there no real pattern of identity for this church in externals? Is she a chameleon to blend with the surrounding society?

Not to speak too dogmatically, there most certainly is a pattern of externals. Both 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy affirm such. And the pattern carries the weight of apostlic authority. To vear from the pattern was to invite the apostles' wrath, as the Judaisers found out.

Let us look closely at what Paul told the Corinthians: "For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." (1 Cor. 4:17.) "But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches." (1 Cor. 7:17.) "But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God." (1 Cor. 11:16.) "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." (1 Cor. 14:33.) "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also." (1 Cor. 16:1.)

Corinth was tempted to be unique among her sister congregations (1 Cor. 4:6-7; 14:36-37). Paul rebukes her for it. More than just moral fiber and proper understanding of the resurrection, her worship in the assembly and delegation of authority were to coincide with the pattern established in all the churches by Paul. Timothy was to come and insure the adherence to the pattern that loyalty to Jesus demanded.

In Ephesus, Timothy was to repeat the procedure (1 Tim. 1:3; 3:15). Titus was to do the same in Crete (Titus 1:5, 13-14). These things are not hard to understand.

Yet involved with the pattern is the freedom of conscience that personal devotion is allowed in disputable matters (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 7: 17). But nothing is disputable where the apostles have legislated.

Notice that the Jew could remain a Jew with all his traditions and scruples, but the church was not a Jewish society even among the Jews (Gal. 2:15-16). Where Gentile culture was pronounced, the Gentile was not to become Jewish because he became a Christian (Acts 21:25); but neither was the assembly of God to succumbe to heathen ways (1 Cor. 10:20).

The point is simply that in matters of culture and conscience the individual was and is free to either maintain his scruples or to mingle as is needed for the gospel's sake as long as no truth is violated (1 Cor. 9:19-23). But this speaks to the individual and not to the assembly (Rom. 14:22). The church, as emphasized by the apostles, is always above any cultural distinctions. Being culturally neutral, her worship and work is able to fit into any social clime **unchanged** (Dan. 2:44). The individual Christian can maintain his cultural and conscientious identity (1 Cor. 7:18-20), but he is to keep it personal (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11). It has no value or benefit in the church. Here Christ only is stressed. And what is necessary to stress Christ was stressed in the writings of the apostles and the plain pattern they established by the Holy Spirit (2 Thes. 2:15). The pattern was stressed to Christians around the world. What they stressed can be stressed in any culture or society today without change. It had better be our stress, and our only stress, if we would inherit the Kingdom.

Drinking Popcorn on TV

Michael D. Stone, Winston-Salem, NC

On Monday, August 18, my wife and I received some publicity on television which had not been solicited. Barbara is a junior at the University of North Carolina, majoring in secondary education in mathematics. I decided to accompany her through the registration process since I have had a lot of experience with these kinds of things. In view of the long lines which have a tendency to try men's patience, I am glad that I accompanied her through the registration procedure. The university showed some compassion by furnishing free popcorn and lemonade. The popcorn was in a large bowl from which the students would dip out with a scoop and deposit in a small paper cup. Since the cup was so small, I decided to put the cup to my mouth and let the popcorn roll in instead of trying to get my big hand into the cup. By this method, I was able to eat more popcorn and at a faster pace. After the registration, we were on our way to the bookstore to purchase her books. As we were walking down the long sidewalk to the store, here came the news team with the cameras aimed at us and following us as we walked. Barbara whispered to me that she was nervous. I said just relax, they probably are not filming you but rather me. Perhaps they think I am somebody important. So here we were being filmed by WXII-TV as we walked and I appeared to be drinking something from the cup. As I said, actually I was not drinking anying, but was putting the cup to my mouth so that the popcorn could roll out. That evening as we watched the news we were shocked at the context in which we were filmed. As the newscasters introduced some

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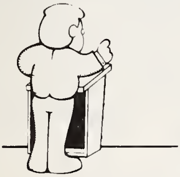
of the stories that would be covered in the news, they said that a report would be given concerning the "drinking law in North Carolina." And there we were briefly on the TV screen. By this time, we were sitting on the edge of our seats wondering if we were going to be shown again during the main report. Well, we were! As the newscasters talked about the new drinking law in North Carolina (must be 21 to purchase, possess or consume any alcoholic beverage), there Barbara and I were again on TV. Out of a student population of over 10,000, why in the world did they pick us for this report? Needless to say, we have received many phone calls and personal comments concerning the incident. I'm not mad at the TV station, however, an important lesson of life has been brought to our minds again. "Don't judge a tree by the way the leaves are blowing." Folks, it really was popcorn!



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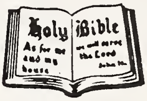

The Importance of Preaching

Johnny Melton, Statesville, NC

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . Preach the word!" What a marvelous privilege and what an awesome challenge. John R.W. Stott begins his excellent book on preaching, **Between Two Worlds,** with the statement, "Preaching is indispensable to Christianity." Jesus is portrayed in the gospel as a preacher. E.C. Dargan has written: "The Founder of Christianity was himself the first of its preachers; but he was preceded by his forerunner and followed by his apostles, and in the preaching of these the proclamation and teaching of God's Word by public address was made an essential and permanent feature of the Christian religion."

Despite the simple Pauline exhortation, "Preach the word!" and the obvious truth that God's only begotten Son was a preacher, preaching is not always held in high esteem and the importance of preaching is regularly questioned. According to George Sweazey, in his book, **Preaching the Good News,** the value of preaching has been challenged repeatedly throughout history. "In 1880 the **London Times** started a great discussion with the question, 'Why not be content to worship only, when we go to church?' In 1890 a New England periodical created a stir with a symposium on 'Shall we go on preaching?' In 1900 it was seriously questioned whether there would be any place for preaching in the new century. In the 1920s a prominent Episcopal minister made headlines across the nation by demanding 'a moratorium on preaching.' "

Even our language suggests that preaching has fallen onto hard times. "Don't preach to me!" is not only heard on the lips of the blatently rebellious, but also from the sensitive and concerned as well. To refer to a speech as "preachy" or "sermonizing" is a crushing criticism. When no one wants to hear a sermon or be preached to, it is little wonder that the importance of preaching is challenged.

However, there is something vital about preaching. In Sir Walter Scott's novel, **The Heart of Midlothian,** Jeanie is determined to go to London to plead for Effie's life. She says, "A letter can not look, and pray, and beg, and beseech, as the human voice can do to the human heart." Indeed, the human voice, the human eye, and human presence are the means of communication the human heart loves best. And as long as that is true, preaching will continue to be vital to the cause of Christ.

Because preaching is so important and yet its value is so frequently doubted, those of us who preach must never flag in our efforts to improve and enhance our proclamation of God's word. Preaching is an exhalted task and must not be taken lightly. Haddon Robinson, in the preface to **Biblical Preaching** quotes the following from **Lectures on Preaching** by Matthew Simpson concerning the preacher and preaching: "His throne is the pulpit; he stands in Christ's stead; his message is the word of God; around him are immortal souls; the Savior, unseen, is beside him; the Holy Spirit broods over the congregation; angels gaze upon the scene, and heaven and hell await the issue. What associations, and what vast resposibility!"

"Heaven and hell await the issue." Certainly with that burden of responsibility we who preach will want to do all we can to communicate effectively the love of God and the grace of Jesus Christ.

Because we believe in the importance of preaching and in order to promote a return to biblical preaching, **Carolina Christian** will feature articles on preachers and preaching under the heading "Carolina Pulpit." It is our sincere desire and earnest prayer that these articles will be helpful to those who preach and to those who listen to preaching.

Sermon Seeds

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

A Prayer of Thanks

1. Introduction.
   - A. Text: Colossians 1:12-14
   - B. Remember the ugly ingratitude of the lepers in Luke 17:11-19. We ought to be grateful for all that God has done for us in Christ. This text appears in the context of Paul's prayer for the Colossians. Paul's prayers were always filled with thanksgiving. Here we find four great blessings for which we ought to be thankful.

II. Body.
   - A. Thankful for Our Inheritance (v. 12).
   - B. Thankful for Our Deliverence (v.13).
   - C. Thankful for Our Redemption (v.14).
   - D. Thankful for Our Forgiveness (v.14).

III. Conclusion: May God be praised for freeing us to hope in Christ.

The Nature of Our Hope

I. Introduction: Hebrews 6:18-19. Here we find three qualities of Christian hope.

II. Body.
   - A. It Is a Motivating Hope (v.18, "set before us").
   - B. It Is a Comforting Hope (v. 18, "a strong consolation").
   - C. It Is a Stabilizing Hope (v.19, "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul").

III. Conclusion: Understand that our hope is grounded in the character of God Himself, "that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie. . . ." We know that Christ is our forerunner and that He is coming for us one day, for God has promised it!

The High Priest of Our Help

I. Introduction: Hebrews 4:14-16. The primary exhortation of the epistle of Hebrews is found in this text — "Let us hold fast our profession." So much was against these Jewish Christians that they had shown signs of faltering. The letter assures them that there is no safety in apostasy; safety is found only in steadfastness in the Lord Jesus Christ. To encourage them, they are pointed to Jesus, the great High Priest. Here they can see:

II. Body.

A. The Sympathy He Shares (v. 15).
B. The Confidence He Instills (v. 16, "Let us therefore come boldly . . .").
C. The Blessings That Are Bestowed (v.16b).
  1. "Mercy" — love that helps the weak and distressed.
  2. "Grace" — the love that God bestows in gifts.

III. Conclusion: Can we hold fast to our profession of Christ? Yes, when we understand that we are not left to fight our battles and endure our suffering alone. Here we find the help of victorious strength.

Reasons for Praise

I. Introduction.

A. 1 Peter 2:9-10. This text appears in the context of an exhortation to abstinence from fleshly lusts in the pursuit of spiritual growth. Basic to the exhortation is the element of praise. Praising God is more than a well-worn phrase to be shouted in the fever-pitch of spiritual fervor. Praise is to be a life-style.
B. But why should we praise God? Because:

II. Body.

A. We Have Received a Calling, "Called out of darkness into his marvelous light."
B. We Have Received an Identity, "Now are the people of God."
C. We Have Received Mercy, "But now have obtained mercy."

III. Conclusion: All of these great privileges carry with them one great responsibility: that of revealing the praises of God to a lost world. We must proclaim to a world still in darkness, a world without mercy and identity, the excellencies of God. Each of us must be a living advertisement of God and the blessings of the Christian life.

Book Review

Phil Stapp, Winston-Salem, NC

A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamics of the Gospel, Richard Lischer; Abingdon, 1981, Nashville, TN; 103 pages.

"**A Theology of Preaching** is actually a theological preface whose aim is to show how theology informs preaching and how preaching, as a Kerygmatic, oral, practical activity, informs theology and brings it to its final form of expression." This statement, made by the author in his preface, summarizes the contents of this book. This is a well-written, informative, thought-provoking that every preacher should read.

The author begins by examining the historically negative results of preaching's exclusion from theology. He then demonstrates the benefits derived from the proper interaction of the two disciplines. He concludes this section with an excellent discussion on preaching as theology. The author goes on to explore the centrality of the resurrection in both theology and preaching. As he points out, the resurrection is not a story, it is a proclamation, and the source of our power to preach.

Dr. Lischer then discusses the relation of the law and the gospel, and preaching as the word of God. It is important that we understand true preaching to be just that, the proclamation of God's word. As the author states, "A biblical sermon is an exposition of the Scripture, which is an exposition of the gospel, which is an exposition of the life of God Himself. We preach the Bible Kerygmatically according to its own **raison d'etre** (reason for existence), knowing that to do anything less is to reduce the living scriptural word to a dead letter."

The author's message is an important one, preaching is theology, theology that is grounded in the word of God. The importance of preaching cannot be overstated, for, as the author notes, "The majority of Christians encounter theology only in its final form, preaching."

The South Carolina

Novem

Daily Themes

Time	Theme
8:30	Powerful Preaching
9:00-9:45	Agressive Evangelism
10:00-10:45	Consecrated Churches
11:00-11:45	Dynamic Church Leadership
12:00-1:15	Lunch
1:15-2:00	Strong Marriages
2:00-2:45	Happy Homes
3:00-3:45	Strong Morals
4:00-5:00	Special Discussions and Open Forum
5:00-7:00	Dinner
7:00-8:15	Keynote Message

Session Topics

Tuesday, November 11

"Hit the Nerve, Not the Skin!"
"The Great Commission — Did God Mean Me?"
"There's No Substitute for Work, Brethren!"
"Leaders Must First Be Qualified"
"Let's Put the Commitment Back Into Marriage"
"Fathers, LEAD!"
"Keep Your Word — Someone Is Depending On It!"
"The New Unity Movement"
"The Crying Needs of Man"

*(*There will be a special class for women each day from 11:00-11:45)*

ctures, Myrtle Beach

r 11-14

Wednesday, November 13

"Powerful Preaching Demands Power-Full Preachers!"
"You Must Live It . . . Before You Can Teach It!"
"Is There Sacrifice in Your Service?"
"Leaders That Love Lead Best!"
"Trust Is a Must!"
"What Children Need Most"
"Respect for All Life"
"Bible Translations"
"The Crying Needs of the Church"

Thursday, November 14

"You Can't Convict . . . Until You Are Convicted!"
"Let Us Restore Our Zeal in Soul Winning"
"Fellowship — More Than a Handshake"
"Wanted: Men of Vision" (Class: Developing New Leaders)
"Stewardship in Marriage"
"Family Togetherness: Let's Keep It Alive!"
"Honesty Is Still the Best Policy!"
"Business, Ethics, and the Christian"
"The Crying Needs of the Home"

Friday, November 15

"Expose Today's Heresies"
"Follow-up . . . or Lose Them!"
"Church Discipline: An Act of Love"
"God's Leaders Must Be Fearless!"
"Communications Is the Key!"
"Coping With Anger in the Home"
"Flee Fornication!"
OPEN FORUM (Keynote Speaker)
"The Crying Needs of America"

The Participation Factor

Jeff Lovitt, Booneville, MO

It began only a few years ago during the recession as an innovative entrepreneurial experiment. At first only a few steel mills in the Northeast attempted such a daring adventure, and then, only as a last ditch effort to stay afloat. Even now it is a rare experiment in the corporate business world. But these have shown the rest of us what can happen to a failing, faltering business when its employees band together, buy up stock, and become corporate owners! Having a veted interest and a real part in company affairs makes highly motivated workers! There is no room in such a corporation for the hireling who is irresponsible and unproductive. Workers in these new experimental corportions know that if they do no give their best, they will surely lose the shirt off of their back, and that if they do give their best, success is inevitable — a greater success than they would ever have enjoyed as a mere employee.

Churches and their leaderships who do not recognize and implement this principle will falter and fail, and are in fact now doing so! The wisdom of corporate participation is evident. It is also Biblical! We speak of how the church belongs to Christ and not to us. And we treat it accordingly! "It is not my problem" is the banner under which many march as they leave the work of the church up to someone else. The church does belong to every Christian by right of purchase (Acts 20:28), but it also belongs to Christ by inheritance: "But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever. . . ." (Dan. 7:18; cf. Col. 1:12-13.) And when corporate ownership is practiced, participation results. Paul says that "the whole body" is held together "by that which every joint supplies, according to the **proper working** of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (Eph. 4:16.) There is no room for hirelings who flee and feel no vested interest in God's kingdom (John 10:12).

The challenge for church leadership is first to find ways to motivate the entire membership, and secondly to help them find individual ministries of service (Eph. 4:11-12) that there might truly be a priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9). It is convicting that it took the world to show us the participation factor that is part and parcel of New Testament Christianity. Remember, it was our Master Himself who said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field." (Matt. 13:44; cf. 13:45). Will you buy stock and become a corporate owner in God's kingdom?

Personal Testimonials?

Richard McWilliams, Charleston, SC

The failure of much of the church to be militantly evangelistic as it was in the first century, and in some succeeding times and places, calls forth various diagnoses and remedies for this ill. Yet, if the diagnosis is not correct for an ill, the selected remedy may not only fail to help the condition improve, but even make it worse. And there may be chosen an improper remedy to a properly diagnosed ill.

Is the current evangelism drought caused by complacency and apathy? Or are we proclaiming the wrong message? Or is the problem a combination of one or more of these, or even something else entirely?

In a recent article called **Silent Ambassadors,** complacency and ill-equipped saints were cited as two probable causes. However, the focus of concern came to bear on the message we proclaim. And in the process of evalution, the diagnosis of "the wrong message" was clearly advanced.

The claim was made that "our message" focuses not on the "personal and revolutionary effect on lives" that Christ makes, but on a "neatly organized set of doctrinal tenets," on "baptism, instrumental music, worship, church organization, sectarian names, etc." Further, we, as a brotherhood, were accused of having "little or no sensitivity to the individual needs of our hearers." In fact, the message we proclaim was called a "parody" (poor or weak imitation?) of the gospel. (Or perhaps "parody" was intended here to convey that our motives are bad, that we intend to treat a serious subject, the gospel, in a nonsensical way hoping to draw ridicle to it.)

If this is the illness, does it properly follow that the remedy is to "recount your conversion experience" and to give your "personal testimonial" to the lost? Obviously not.

First, it is clear that the gospel centers in Jesus Christ as was correctly asserted in the article being considered. Every sermon in Acts focuses on Him and His death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 2-4, 7-10, 13, 17-20, 22, 24, 26). It is not correct to assume that people in denominations believe these facts. Some do not. Our teaching must, therefore, never assume that anyone believes these central facts of the gospel. And until one is convinced of these things, to take up baptism or any other subject is improper and ineffective. And there are, no doubt, some who have made such mistakes.

Yet, even if our message has on occasion been defective in this way, it does not follow that the Baptists have been right all along, and that a "personal testimonial" or one's "conversion experience" is what is going to convert folks to Christ. The Apostle Paul has been wrongly accused (in "Silent Ambassadors") of using such tactics. Look again closely at the book of Acts. From Peter's first sermon in Acts 2, to Paul's last defense in Acts 26, personal testimonial is there only in the sense that these men were personal witnesses who saw the resurrected Christ. The fact that Paul saw Him on the road to Damascus does not change this fact. Paul's recitation of His conversion was to prove his apostleship, not to convince people to become Christians based on his personal experience. This is in contrast with the current day "personal testimonials" in which someone tells his "religious experience" and couples that with a testimony of a changed life, which together supposedly prove that he really is a Christian. How distant that is from eyewitness testimony about the resurrected Christ!

The Apostles proclaimed the **objective** truth, the gospel, the word of God, **not** some **subjective** report on a changed life. The doctrine of giving a "personal testimony" or "conversion experience," in the modern sense of it, is denominational to the core and is based on false doctrine.

Let us do as Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) and as the Apostles did (Acts), and preach the gospel to every creature. This gospel is still the Apostles' eyewitness testimony and all doctrines related to it. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). The fact that some do not seek this, but seek the gospel of the changed life does not mean that we should conform to their worldly expectations. Neither Jesus nor the apostles changed the nature of the message God gave them. We must do as they did and proclaim God's message. Let us simply take the saving message of Christ to the world. Our deeds will amply proclaim what we are.

If we ever revert to the "personal testimonial" religion so prominent in our society, we deserve what we will get. "Growth" will come to the group who can tell the best stories of what God has done for them. Let us plant and water with the **gospel** message and God will give the increase.

"For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2.)

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Letters to the Editor

Dear brother Winters:

I really must express my surprise and disapointment that you would publish an article which characterizes someone as being either "ignorant" or "having a wilful disregard for the truth." This is not only untrue, it is unkind, unchristian and is beneath the dignity of a Christian gentleman and journalist. Granted that the writer may have been caught up in the emotions of the discussion, he should have caught his "railing accusation" in the proofreading process and/or it should have been deleted by the editor, for it in no way contributed to the purpose of the article — unless the purpose was to take a dirty shot at a brother! . . . I feel both you and Melton owe me an apology. While we may differ on the matter, let us not stoop to such low levels. — Bill Heinselman, Cary, NC

Of course brother Heinselman is right about the paragraph in question. Johnny should not have written it, and we should have deleted it in the editorial process. But he did write it and we did not delete it. We thus stand justly condemned as stooping below the dignity of Christian gentlemen in dealing with an honored brother in Christ. For such we have no excuse, but we do plead with all to be as charitable with us as possible, ascribing the error to Johnny's zeal and our ignorance. We here and now offer our apology to brother Heinselman.

Note from Johnny Melton: While I disagree with the position by brother Heinselman espoused and I stand unreservedly on the basic content of my article, I do apologize for using such inflammatory language. In the future I will strive to extend greater courtesy to those with whom I disagree.

Dear Howard:

Greetings to you, your family, and to the staff of **Carolina Christian.** I continue to appreciate the paper very much, especially the fine job you do with your editorials. I have intended to write for sometime, but procrastination overruled. I enjoy reading the paper every month and receive encouragement from it. — Richard Harp, Auckland, New Zealand.

The Harps have now spent seven years in New Zealand and are doing an outstanding work. They are now thinking of staying on several more years because, as he says, "We love it here and feel our work is contributing more to the kingdom than we could in the states." Thank God for brethren, such as Richard and Dixie Harp, who go, taking the saving truth of the gospel around the world.

Contributors

Each contributor of $25 or more (to help us publish 1 Corinthians and ultimately to get the paper on a self-sustaining basis) will be listed in the paper and will receive a free autographed copy of **Commentary on First Corinthians** as soon as it comes from the press. We hope many of you will want to join this number.

Bill Ijames	$25.00
James A. Harper	$25.00

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Have You Seen Me?

Jeff Payne, Greenville, SC

"Have you seen me?" There it is in bold, dark print. It's a piercing question. It pulls strongly at your heart.

I'm talking about the faces of those little kids who are missing. This morning I was looking at the smiling face of a little blue-eyed, brown-haired girl who is seven years old, weighing 28 lbs., 2'10" in height. This sweet child, someone's baby girl, has been missing since 1983!

You see these faces on the back of discount coupons, milk carton, television sets, newspapers, and posters. It's haunting when one begins to think about what has happened to these children. Where are they? Who has them? What are they doing with them? Will their loved ones ever embrace them again???

I don't know about you, but something deep within me cries out saying, "I want to do something to help."

When I placed that coupon on my desk I thought about all the people in our world who are "missing." No, not in the same sense as these thousands of children, but they are still missing. I am thinking of the wondering, groping millions who flood the streets of our major cities or wrestle through private "hells" in their fine homes in suburban America. They are there, and they are "missing." All ages, sizes — lost!

All of the sudden I am struck hard with the realization that Jesus wants **me** to seek out those who are missing. He wants my heart to ache for those who are far away from the shores of peace and safety.

"Have you seen me?" Good question, isn't it? Honestly, it hurts just-a-bit; yes, we have seen you. We work with you, live with you, attend school with you, play with you. Everyday we see you.

I don't know about you, but I am going to help lead these people home!

Editorial Book Views

Biblical Interpretation, Principles and Practice, eds. F. Furman Kearley, Edward P. Myers, and Timothy D. Hadley; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506; 336 pages, paper $12.95.

Written by 25 different scholars in the church today (including the editors), this book proclaims itself to be "Studies in Honor of Jack Pearl Lewis, Professor of Bible, Harding Graduate School of Religion." This warns you that it will be somewhat technical, but not to the point of putting it beyond use for the average student. It is divided into three parts. Part one is an introduction to Biblical Interpretation. Part two deals with Old Testament Interpretation. And part three centers on New Testament Interpretation. But in addition to this there are some introductory matters, including "The Life and Work of Jack P. Lewis," and two concluding chapters, one on Bibliography of Biblical Interpretation by Edward P. Myers, and the other a Bibliography of the Scholarly Writings of Jack P. Lewis, compiled by his wife. While not agreeing with every conclusion drawn, we readily acknowledge that this work makes a distinct contribution to restoration literature in the field of Biblical interpretation. We started out to read it only for the purpose of reviewing it, but before we had finished the first chapter we had decided that it was **must** reading for our own benefit. Everyone who wishes to study the Bible beyond surface matter could profit from this volume. Some of its principles will not be easy for a lot of us to practice, but those who try will be able to strike rich veins of Scriptural truth which might otherwise be missed. Thus for the serious student (and every teacher and preacher should be serious about his study of the Scriptures) the purchase of this book will be money well spent.

News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Chadbourn. Larry Potter reports four recent restorations. The attendance is also increasing. The church is in critical need of financial help. Immediately they need money to pay for seating which was an absolute essential. Contact Larry Potter, Box 434, 28431.

Charlotte. David Chisolm is now working as the minister of the Northside congregation. This group meets at 3210 N. Tryon Street.

Thomasville. Tim Shoulders is now working with the congregation. He comes to the Carolinas from Williamsburg, Virgina.

Statesville. Four additional deacons have been appointed at Northview.

Statesville. A one-day lectureship was held at Highland Acres on September 13 on the theme, "Lord, Help Us Save Our Children." Stanley Crews was the featured speaker.

High Point. The Eastchester congregation now has Gary Durham working with them. He is formerly of Bluefield, West Virginia and is a 1980 graduate of East Tennessee School of Preaching.

Winston-Salem. Floyd Dethrow, formerly of Wilmington, is now working in Winston-Salem.

Charlotte. Archdale has appointed seven additional deacons. This doubles the number of men serving in this capacity. The congregation has also begun a Mothers' Morning Out program. A bond sales plan is underway to finance a building addition.

Charlotte. Westside set aside $1000 of their August 31 contribution to assist Claude Smith in the work in Hartsville, SC. They also assist this work on a monthly basis.

Cleveland. The Rock Hill church in rural Rowan County recently had a gospel meeting in which three were baptized. Robert Lyons is the regular preacher. Attendance averages 70-90. (Thanks to Stanley Crews for this information.)

Jacksonville. The Roosevelt Drive church has a successful plan for raising funds for AGAPE of North Carolina and other good works. For information contact Ron Edwards, the minister, (919) 347-1122.

NC Conversions:

Brooks Ave., Raleigh 2; Gastonia 3; Cary 1; Taylorsville 1; Northview, Statesville, 1; Archdale, Charlotte, 4; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 1; Rock Hill, Cleveland, 3. Total: 16.

Elizabeth City

LARRY HARRINGTON, Reporting: We at Elizabeth City (Bayside church of Christ) are asking for your prayers and support. We need to raise $500 a month to support myself and family here at Bayside.

We averaged 10 (36) more in August than we did in July (26) in attendance, but that is not much when you compare it to the population of Northeastern North Carolina. In Pasquotank county where Elizabeth City is located there are 28,642 people. In Caraden, Curiltuck and Dare counties (East and South East of us) there are 38,047 people. In Perquimans county there are 9,902 people. This totals 76,591 people living in the whole area. Our job is large but we can do

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it with the help of God and God's people. Will you help by praying for and supporting us. Thank you.

(In addition to brother Harrington's report the following is taken from **Restoration Leadership Quarterly:** The Bayside congregation is the only non-instrumental church within a 30-mile radius. Brother Harrington feels secure in and with the growth potential for the Bayside work. First, this is his home area, he knows the culture and the people. Secondly, he is enthusiastic about the educational and business and business base of the area. Congregations looking to do some stateside mission work would wo well to give Larry and the Bayside congregation some serious consideration. This good man is moving in faith. Presently, Bayside can only provide $200 a week support and space for a double-wide mobile home. $125 per week support needs to be raised immediately. All gifts and inquiries may be addressed to: Bayside Church of Christ, c/o Tex Pettigrew, Box 101, South Mill, NC 27976 (919-771-5711) or Larry Harrington, Route 4, Box 22, Elizabeth City, NC 29708 (919-338-8601).

Taylorsville

KEN KOKOTKIEWICZ, Reporting: We of the Taylorsville church would like to share in the news of one more baptism in the month of June. Bringing our total to five for this year. We are very thankful the Lord continues to bless us with souls! We have a goal of 60 in attendance by the end of this year.

Northview, Statesville

STANLEY CREWS, Reporting: Another great step forward for Northview! Groundbreaking will take place this afternoon for the start of construction of the addition to our building, the second addition in the fourteen year history of the church. Northview met in a rented building at 128 E. Sharp St. from its beginning on August 20, 1972 until October 13, 1974. At that time we moved into the first section of our present building, the crossbar of our T-shaped edifice. Our present auditorium was occupied for the first time on August 5, 1979.

The new addition, to be build to the rear of the present structure, will all necessitate some major alterations to the original crossbar area. There will be new, larger classrooms, a larger fellowship area, more storage space, new restrooms, new nursery facilities, and an office complex. The office area includes separate offices for the three preachers, a secretary's office and an elder's conference room which will also serve as the church library. This section will be self-sufficient as to heating and cooling.

The new main entrance will be on the west side of the building in the area of our present restrooms. Part of the six-acre tract

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purchased a few years ago to the west of our original property will be graded and prepared as a parking area, as much of our present rear parking space will be occupied by the new addition.

West Jefferson.

HOWARD WINTERS, Reporting: The work in West Jefferson is progressing the best I have ever seen it. This has been our best year ever, especially in attendance and contribution. But we still have needs. The current one is for a van with which to facilitate our work. If any church has one not in use or if buying a new one and wishes to sell the old one (at a very reasonable price), we would like to correspond with it. Write the church at P.O. Box 117, West Jefferson, NC or call me at (919) 246-4011.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Aiken. David Pharr spoke in a three-night series in September at the Whiskey Road congregation. There was one restoration and one baptism. David Thompson is the local preacher.

Rock Hill. James Watkins is scheduled for a gospel meeting at Charlotte Avenue October 27-31.

SC Conversions:

Greenwood 4; Northeast, Taylors, 3; Myrtle Beach 3; Bennettsville 1; Duncan 1; S. Pinckney St., Union, 1; Whiskey Rd., Aiken, 1. Total: 14

Central, Spartanburg

ERNIE THIGPEN, Reporting: When we take personal inventory of the work of the Lord, we can sometimes lose our perspective. Central has the highest membership in our history; we've had a 17 percent increase in Sunday morning attendance. We've broken our old record attendance by over 220 people; a new visitation program has over 40 families participating; over 55 families have joined in our "gourmets" efforts which helps us get to know each other better; we've already baptized as many as we did all last year minus one; our giving has increased over last year although we are still not meeting the weekly budget; our Family Bible Nights set all time attendance records; we are sponsoring more mission works with more funds than ever; and in November, Central is sending Albert to India for a six-week mission effort.

Charleston

AL SIMMONS, Reporting: I would like to inform you of the ministry of the college campuses in the Charleston area. The work is overseen by the elders of the North Charleston church of Christ and is a ministry of this congregation.

We are presently in an organizing status, but are anticipating beginning in full bloom shortly after school begins (Aug. 28). We are also in the process of obtaining a building to be used as as meeting place for devotionals, lectures, and other related group activities. Please do not mistake the use of this building! Allow me to emphasize that this is a ministry of the North Charleston congregation and is overseen by its elders. This building will NOT be used as a "house church," nor does the North Charleston believe in such. This building will be used merely for weekday devotionals, counseling, lectures, etc. We hope to have this building within the next three months.

We are looking for students and prospective students who are strong members of the Lord's church who can assist in the establishing of this program, who can also aid in the withstnding of false doctrine, and who would be willing to assist the evangelizing of the campuses. If you are familiar with anyone interested, please contact us as soon as possible. (Excerpted from a letter. Call brother Simmons at (803) 571-3763.)

* * *

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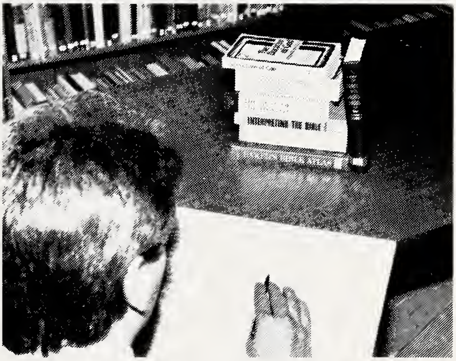

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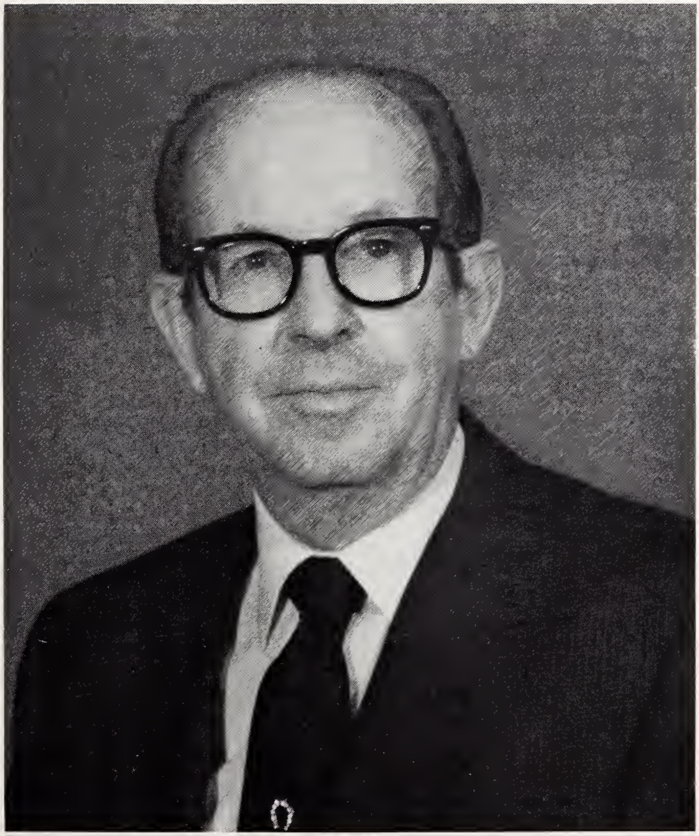

A. Lowell Altizer, Virginia Preacher
See Page 5

editorial

WELCOME, VIRGINIA READERS

This issue will be going to several hundred new readers in the grand old state of Virginia. We welcome the opportunity to thus introduce **Carolina Christian** to you. And we hope that many of you will want to become a regular subscriber. We believe that nearly every issue is worth the annual subscription price of $7. In fact, we feel so certain that you will agree with us that we are making an unheard of offer. If you will subscribe for a year and read the teaching articles that will appear in the 12 issues and you do not feel that you have received your money's worth, write us a note at the end of the year (when you receive a renewal statement) and tell us so and we will send you a second year absolutely free.

One more thing: we are extremely happy to be able to feature a native son of Virginia in this issue (both on the front cover and in a biographical article by David Pharr). Probably no man living or dead has meant so much to the Lord's cause in Virginia as A. Lowell Altizer. He is a powerful preacher, true to the word of God. His life is a shining example of what a Christian should be. The amount of work he has done for the cause of Christ is astonishing. The length of his tenure of preaching in Virginia is more than impressive. The friends he has made and the number he has reached with the gospel is innumerable (as far as human count is concerned). His influence has been felt far and wide and there is hardly a nook or corner in Virginia (especially in the southwestern part of the state) where it has not penetrated. While there are many good and great men working for the Lord in the Old Dominion state, none stands taller, none stands truer, none stands purer, and none stands more capable, more sincere, or more devoted than A. Lowell Altizer. We are thus thrilled to be able to feature him this month, to salute him for his long years of work in Virginia, and to number him among our dearest friends. Generations yet unborn will reap from the seed which he has sown. When we think what the world, and especially the work in Virginia, would be like without him, we cannot help but to exclaim, "Thank God for A. Lowell Altizer and the grand work he has done!"

IS HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF?

There can be but little doubt that the winds of change are blowing in churches of Christ everywhere. Many leaders in the church seem to be caught up in a movement to give up the plea to settle all religious matters by the Bible and to remove from the church every Scriptural mark of distinctiveness. They seem bound and determined to return to denominationalism, from whence the restoration plea called them. But the problem of departure is not a new one. Paul saw an apostasy coming in his day (Acts 20:28-30; 2 Thess. 2). So did true men of God in the restoration movement in the latter part of the nineteenth century. We have been reading Moses E. Lard (**Lard's Quarterly**) for most of this year and we have been amazed at the parallel between what was

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happening (which resulted in the division that produced the liberal Christian Church and the ultra-liberal Disciples of Christ) in the 1860's and what is now taking place in the 1980's. Read the following excerpts, keeping in view the vocabulary coming from certain men and certain papers, and see if it does not appear that history is truly repeating itself. Lard observed:

"While Paul was yet alive the mystery of iniquity began to work, and a falling away was foreseen. The fortunes of the ancient church will be repeated in our hands. A falling away will occur, and the iniquity which will induce it is at this moment at work. The sturdy love for the primitive faith which characterized the early preachers in the reformation (restoration — HW) is cooling in men who still linger in our ranks and call us brethren. They are yet with us, but they are not of us. . . . They may be easily known.

"In the first place, they are intensely sentimental; rather, they are intensely transcendental. They are very clerical in bearing, soft in speech, and languid and effeminate in spirit. They are poets and ladies' men, exquisites in parlors, and never condemn anything except their brethren. . . .

"In the second place, they have an enormous fondness for sects and sectarians; and scowl on no one so indignantly as on the brother who dares to speak against them. With them sectarians are all Christians; and it is a favorite saying among them that 'we are as sectarian as any other people.' They seldom speak of their brethren except to disparage them; and never of 'the other' parties of the day except to laud them. In plain English, these men see nothing good in the great brotherhood to whom they are an offense, nor anything bad in the sects with whom their affinities really are. . . .

"In the third place, there is a peculiar dialect which characterizes these men. 'The reformation (restoration — HW) is a failure,' is one of their favorite sayings. Not quite true, gentlemen. You are the failures; it is not the cause we plead. Again, and especially, 'I do not believe that baptism is for the remission of sins.' This is said with weighty emphasis. Why, then, do you still continue to fraternize with a people who do believe it? . . . 'We must quit opposing the sects; they are as good as we are.' This is another of the pet expressions which ripen in the lips of these men. But we shall not abandon our opposition so long as the Bible remains the law of our action. On this you may count with confidence. Further: 'We must quit preaching our distinctive doctrines;' and again, 'our religion lacks style.' But on these items I shall detain the reader no longer. A few examples are deemed sufficient." (**Lard's Quarterly**, Vol. IV, pp. 347, 348.)

COVENANT RELATIONSHIP

When one becomes a Christian he enters into covenant relationship with Christ (cf. Heb. 8:6-13). This concept is vital for us to understand, at least to some degree, because covenant relationship brings covenant responsibilities (responsibilities to enter or establish the covenant and then to maintain it once it is established).

Basically a covenant is an agreement between consenting parties in which the terms or stipulations of the agreement are mutually binding. The terms or conditions may not be the same for all parties, but the conditions bound on each are binding as long as the covenant remains in effect. Most of us, however, are not overly familiar with the word covenant (it has about dropped out of our vocabulary) and the word by which it is defined, agreement, is broader in some respects and may suggest something of a less binding nature. It thus might help us to see the concept more clearly if we state it in a familiar term. The word we use which comes closest to covenant is contract. As we now use the word contract here it means an agreement between consenting parties wherein each binds himself to certain obligations to the other. There may be stipulated conditions to be met before the contract can become effective, and, once in effect, there may be conditions the parties must continue to meet in order to keep the contract in force. An offer to contract is not a contract until all the conditions are met by the parties involved.

Roger Himes, an attorney who puts Christianity to the courtroom test in his book called **Counselor, State Your Case!**, says: "Certain offers to contract contain conditions within the offer that must be complied with or else the contract is of no effect. For example, God could have placed a condition in His offer saying that, before His offer could be accepted, the offeree must have reached a certain age. Likewise, He could have built in a condition that, after acceptance, the offeree could never sin again as long as he lived. The first illustration would be an example of a condition prior to accepting the offer. The second illustration would be an example of a condition subsequent to accepting the offer.''

If we understand what Himes says here about a contract, we should have no difficulty whatsoever in understanding covenant relationship as it relates to the conditions of salvation imposed upon all by the Lord in the New Testament. The Lord has made provisions for our salvation. But before we can accept His offer we must enter into an agreement (covenant or contract) with Him. We cannot accept on our own conditions. He Himself has given the terms of the offer in the New Testament (the new covenant). He has made the offer and He has stipulated the terms upon which the offer can be accepted. There are, therefore, some conditions given by the Lord which are necessary for us to meet before we can enter into or establish the contract. But that is not all: once the terms have been met and the contract established, there are other conditions equally as necessary in order to maintain it or keep it in force. Jesus says in essence, ''If you will enter into covenant relationship with Me, the benefits you will receive is salvation from sin now and in the world to come eternal life. To enter into or establish this contract you must believe in Me (John 8:24), repent of all sins (Luke 13:5), and be baptized into My body (Mark 16:16; Gal. 3:27). When you meet these conditions the contract will be established and you will be forgiven of all past sins. But once the relationship is established (sins forgiven) to keep the contract in force you must live a faithful Christian life (Rev. 2:10). This offer is made to all who wish to receive the benefits of the contract. Establish (sign) the contract by faith, repentance, and baptism and keep it in force by faithful living and I will save you from past sins, keep on cleansing from daily sins, and then give eternal life when this life is over.''

To receive the benefits we must enter into the contract. But to enter into the contract we must meet the conditions (believe, repent, and be baptized). In order to keep the contract in force, once entered, all the stipulated conditions (be faithful) must be kept. To fail to meet the conditions of entrance would be to fail to establish the contract; to fail to keep the condition of faithfulness would be to break the contract after it went into effect. A contract is not a contract until all the conditions are met to establish it. An existing contract is made void when the conditions necessary to continue it are neglected.

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A. Lowell Altizer, Virginia Preacher

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Recently I preached in my sixth gospel meeting at the Collinsville, Virginia, congregation, where A. Lowell Altizer has served as regular minister for over 20 years. Though the Altizers live only a few miles from the North Carolina border, he is not as well known in the Carolinas as he is in Virginia. It is our purpose, therefore, to share with our readers a brief biography of this faithful servant.

A native of Floyd County, Virginia, Lowell obeyed the gospel in 1930 at Copper Valley, Virginia, where his father served as an elder.

In 1940 he married Faye Mitchell, also of Floyd County. They both graduated from National Business College of Roanoke and settled in Roanoke, where both were employed in accounting work and Lowell continued studying to be a Certified Public Accountant. Faye's religious background was with the Church of the Brethren denomination, but she became a Christian according to New Testament teaching soon after they were married. This was at about the time the first congregation was established in Roanoke. From her conversion sister Altizer has been faithfully devoted to the Lord and to her husband as he has ministered the gospel.

In 1943 they decided to leave their profitable business positions to go to Freed-Hardeman College to prepare for full-time church work. Their appreciation of Freed-Hardeman College is evident in the fact that they have attended the annual Bible lectures there for 43 consecutive years. After spending 1944-1946 at the college they returned to the mission fields of Virginia, locating in the town of Christiansburg, where they continued to live for 19 years.

When Altizer began full-time preaching there were only six full-time ministers between Bristol, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. During the years from 1940 to the present there have been nearly 90 new congregations established in Virginia. Either directly or indirectly the Altizers were involved in many of these works.

A new building was erected at Christiansburg while they helped build the congregation there. In later years a new and much larger building has replaced that first one and the Christiansburg congregation continues as one of the strongest congregations in the state. (They now host the annual Virginia Bible Lectures.)

In 1965 they moved to Collinsville to a relatively new work. Collinsville is in Henry County next to Martinsville. This is just north of High Point and Winston-Salem. Lowell assisted in the completion of the building there and the church has enjoyed steady growth. Lowell has personally baptized 161 believers in Collinsville.

While only associated full time with two congregations, brother Altizer has held over 250 gospel meetings. These have been in 14 states, but most of them in mission areas. He also assisted in getting churches started and buildings erected in Radford and Blacksburg. With his own hands he has baptized nearly 600. Lowell and Faye travel 25,000 miles each year, mostly in southwestern Virginia, visiting and preaching.

During one of the meetings in which I was with Lowell we went to visit an elderly invalid lady who had never obeyed the gospel. She had been taught in her youth that baptism was only for men, not for women. Lowell patiently showed her Acts 8:12 ("They were baptized, both men and women") and also the case of Lydia in Acts 16:15. The lady was persuaded that she could and should be baptized. With the assistance of two of her sons we baptized her that afternoon. One of those sons was a Methodist, but cooperated. The other son is an elder in the Collinsville church.

Altizer has been especially effective in radio work. While living in Christiansburg a program was begun on a station in nearby Radford. That program has continued for 36 years. He has been on Collinsville radio for 20 years and is currently broadcasting over two area stations each week and also has a weekly program at Rural Retreat, Virginia.

While his broadcasts were being heard over the Radford station an unusual and exciting event occured. In nearby Floyd County two sisters, adults still living in their parents' home in a rural area, became regular listeners. They learned the truth by means of these radio lessons. They made a decision, therefore to obey the gospel. Early one morning they walked the two miles from home to the highway, caught a ride to Christiansburg on a milk truck, came to the church building, introduced themselves to Altizer and asked to be baptized into Christ. They had had no prior contact with the church. Both are now devoted members in the congregation meeting in the town of Floyd.

Mention should be made also of the Altizer's success as parents. Both of their daughters, now living in Tennessee and Alabama, are faithful Christians and are married to faithful Christians. The Altizers have four grandchildren.

It is typical for men, especially preachers, to seem ineffective among their own people. It is more usual for preachers to find success in areas distant from home. But the Altizers have lived all but their college years in the general area of their nativity. They love the church and people of Virginia, and they are loved and appreciated in return. Lowell's record for soundness is without blemish. He is a man of the Book. He is a servant of the church. He is a preacher of the gospel. They are Virginians. They are Christians!

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A Rude Innovation

L. Roger Powell, Waynesboro, VA

In Hebrews 2:12 the inspired writer quoted our Lord as saying, "In the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto thee."

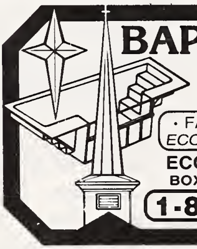
When I was a small boy I went every year on the first Sunday afternoon in May to Harmony, North Carolina to attend what was called "The Old Folks' singing" where a book entitled **The Christian Harmony** was used. Usually we first sang the notes of a song before we sang the words. Many of those participating would be in their seventy's, eighty's, or ninety's. Although I was but a child I remember this singing as being a very meaningful experience among those who participated. One thing that made it so was the fact the singing was pure a capella (without instrumental accompaniment). It was many years later that I became acquainted with the churches of Christ, and was introduced to the Biblical teachings on a capella and congregational singing as it is presented in the New Testament.

In the **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** (Vol. IV, p. 2429) there is an interesting article on the subject of "Praise" by E.W.G. Masterman. In the article he says, "The spirit of praise is a spirit of song. It may find expression in other ways — in sacrifice, or testimony, or prayer; but it finds its most natural and fullest utterance in lyrical and musical form. . . . Finally, both in the Old Testament and New Testament, the spirit of song gives birth to ordered modes of public praise. In their earlier expressions the praises of Israel were joyful outbursts in song mingled with shouting and dancing to a rude accompaniment of timbrels and trumpets."

I do not know what Mr. Masterman's church identity might be, but I find it interesting that he would refer to the innovation of mechanical instruments of music into the praise of Israel as "rude."

In the **Memoirs of A. Campbell** (page 336), Robert Richardson quotes Mr. Campbell as having written in the **Millenial Harbinger,** "That all persons who have no spiritual discernment, taste or relish for spiritual meditations, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts, should call for such aid is but natural. Pure water from the flinty rock has no attraction for the mere toper or wine-bibber. A little alcohol, or genuine Cognac brandy, or good old Madeira is essential to the beverage to make it truly refreshing. So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I think that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume to all spiritually minded Christians such aids would be as a cowbell in a concert."

The tragedy of innovation lies not only in the fact that we get away from the truth, but in doing so we rob ourselves of that which is genuinely great and beautiful.



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The Grace of God Teaches Us

John Bost, Suffolk, VA

It is the view of many in the religious world that we are saved by grace alone, apart from any obedience or works of any kind. Certainly the Bible teaches that we are saved by grace, apart from any works of merit — one cannot earn salvation (Eph. 2:8-10). But does this mean that one does not have to do anything to be saved? The Bible teaches that one must do something (Matt. 7:21). Even in the church of Christ, some, by their actions, appear to believe that one does not need to do anything to stay in a saved relationship **after** he becomes a Christian. What does the Bible say?

Please read Titus 2. In verses 1-10 Paul innumerates principles of living, and the proper roles of younger men and older men, older women and younger women, and servants and masters. He begins the chapter with an exhortation to Titus, and all preachers, to "speak things that become sound doctrine." In verse 7 he exhorts us all to live "in all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works. . . ." Indeed the entire chapter emphasizes the necessity of a life of good works. Why?

Paul tells us why in verse 9. The grace of God has appeared unto all men. This grace **teaches** us something. There is something that we **can** and **must** learn from the fact that Christ, by the grace of God, died for us. If we have learned about the grace of God, and have not learned the lessons that it teaches, we have fallen short of God's plan for us.

What does God's grace teach us? It teaches that "We should live soberly, righteously, and godly" (v. 12). "Soberly" means "characterized by reason or sanity, self control; showing mental and emotional balance" (Webster). "Sober" is found five times in Titus, including four in chapter 2. "Righteously" means "doing what is right." There is such a thing as right and such a thing as wrong (Rom. 6:16). "Godly" means devoted to God, living that is patterned after God. A godly life shows those around us what God is like. One who is **sober** controls his own appetites, passions, and lusts, thus discharging his duties to himself. One who is **righteous** discharges his duties to others. One who is **godly** discharges his duties to God.

We must live "soberly, righteously, and godly **in this present world.**" We must separate ourselves from the wicked of the world (2 Cor. 6:17), but we cannot separate ourselves from the world. Thus, we must live soberly, righteously, and godly **in** the world (see 1 Pet. 2:11-12).

The way to live soberly, righteously, and godly is to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts" (see 1 John 2:15-16). "Lust" is strong, uncontrolled desire.

We should live this kind of life because of the hope of the appearing of Jesus Christ (v. 13). Jesus promised His return and the resurrection (Acts 1:11; 2 Pet. 3:9-10, 13; Acts 24:15; 1 Thess. 4:16-18).

The salvation of our souls should motivate us to live this kind of life. The grace of God saves us (Titus 2:11, 13; Eph. 2:8-9). We are saved by grace so that we might live a life of good works (Eph. 2:10).

We should live this kind of life because Christ died for us to purify us and redeem us to be a "peculiar people zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9-12; Eph. 2:10). He redeemed us, "bought us back" from sin (Col. 1:13-14). He purified, "cleansed," us with His blood, in which we are "purged to serve him" (Heb. 9:14).

Indeed, we must learn a great lesson from the grace of God. We must learn to rid our lives of sin, and fill our lives with good works.

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The Test of Truth

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

"Why do you speak to them in parables?" He was asked by His disciples. The implication was obvious — didn't the great Teacher understand that speaking in "plain language" would be much easier for the multitudes to understand?

Jesus' answer in essence was that He spoke God's truth in parables in order to test the sincerity of His audience. To those only superficially interested, the parables would prove "too great" a challenge to overcome. But to those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness, the parables would become the keys to unlocking the mysteries of the kingdom of God. What then is the lesson to be gleaned? That we must love the truth enough to be willing to make the search to find it.

Truth must be recognized as the pearl of great price, the treasure hidden in the field. It is to be purchased at the price of tradition, custom, and comfort. It is to be pursued until it is personally captured for although truth resides in public domain it longs to become personal property. And yet paradoxically, truth is never possessed by any man — men are only possessed by the truth.

"And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth some a hundredfold, some sixty and some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear" — the test of truth.

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A Special Invitation to Virginia Readers

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Sample copies of this issue of **Carolina Christian** are being sent to congregations all over Virginia. We want you to read it and to consider subscribing. Also we would appreciate it if you would pass this copy on to another person who may not have seen it.

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Needed: More Andrews

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

We find ourselves today living in the age of "doing things big." In America we are seldom accustomed anymore to doing things on a small scale. The recent birthday celebration for Miss Liberty confirms the fact that we are fascinated and preoccupied with the spectacular.

In many ways the modern church has succumbed to the "doing things big" mentality, with the result that the efforts of smaller and less spectacular people and churches often go unnoticed. For example, upon hearing one of those stirring sermons on the need for evangelism and being convicted that we are not doing enough, the hasty vow is uttered that "I'm going to win twenty people to Christ this year." That is, we are going to make amends in a big way. That's fine. It may well be that an individual has the ability to win twenty souls to Christ this year, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that. Perhaps that individual even fulfills his vow. But what about the person who wins only one soul to Christ in a year's time, yet does it year in and year out? We tend to forget about him.

As we look at the life of Andrew, we see a man who lived in the shadow of his more famous and temperamental brother. His name is often forgotten and he is simply remembered as "Simon Peter's brother." As some would see it, Andrew had the misfortune of being less than spectacular. To tell you the truth, he was quite ordinary, like most of us. Yet, Andrew played a major role in the growth of Christianity in its early stages and serves today as a great example for those of us who are struggling to come to grips with the philosophy of "doing things big." Take a look at John 1:35-42 before you go any further in this article.

The first thing we note about Andrew in this passage is his search for the True One. By trade he was a fisherman, which was the family occupation. However, there must have been something unsettled in the mind of Andrew, for as the passage opens he is a disciple of John the Baptist. At some time he must have heard John preaching about repentance and the kingdom of heaven, and the spark in his heart was fanned into a flame. He had to find the Messiah. He had to continue the search for truth. When John identified Jesus as "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world," Andrew did not need to hear anything more. He left John and pursued Jesus. He and another disciple spent the afternoon with Jesus, questioning and searching, and came away convinced that this Jesus was the Christ. He had been searching for God's answer and found it in Jesus of Nazareth.

We, too, need to be more like Andrew in this way. We must become obsessed with seeking God's answer, persistently searching out the truth until we find it. We must be restless in the pursuit of the True One. But then, once the truth was found, Andrew was not content.

We next see him bringing someone to Christ. Little is said about Andrew in Scripture, but wherever he appears, he always seems to be bringing someone to Jesus. There was the time he brought to Jesus the boy with the five barley loaves and two fishes (John 6:6-13). Then there were the inquiring Greeks (John 12:21-26). Most important of all was his own brother, Peter (John 1:40-42). When Andrew discovered Jesus for himself, he could not keep that discovery to himself. We can almost sense the obvious excitement and joy in his voice as Andrew went to Peter and exclaimed, "We have found Him!" After introducing Peter to Jesus, the world was never again the same. Neither was Peter. And neither was Andrew.

Simon Peter's brother makes us aware of the great need in the church today for quiet, selfless evangelists (evangelists of the ordinary kind). He reminds us that the real key to an effective program of growth and evangelism is the faithful, committed, selfless Christian who has discovered God's answer in Christ and then in his own ordinary way says to another, "Come and see."

The Miracles of Jesus

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Anyone familiar with the life of Jesus must be impressed by the miracles. There are thirty-seven specific scenes where He performs various wonders. Several general references indicate many more, more even than could be recorded. (See John 20:30; 21:25.)

In Matthew 11:2-6 John the Baptist sent an inquiry about Jesus. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up. . . ." These same miracles can strengthen our faith, as we review the sacred record.

First, we may be certain of their reality. A miracle is an event that is an exception to the ordinary course of nature, caused by supernatural (divine) power. What Jesus did was not just marvelous, but miraculous! Not just wonderful, but a wonder! Not the unusual, but the impossible! What He did was not done by science, ingenuity, invention, or human skill; but by the power of the Almighty.

There can be no comparisons between the Lord's miracles and the tricks of counterfeiters, ancient or modern. There have been pretenders from Pharaoh's magicians, to Simon the sorcerer, to modern "faith" healers. But whether Mormon pretentions, Christian Science silliness, or Oral Roberts' antics, none can compare to the genuine miracles of Jesus.

The primary purpose of Christ's miracles was to prove His divine Sonship. They moved Nicodemus toward such a conclusion (John 3:2). Jesus announced this purpose at Capernaum in answer to objections (Mark 2:9-12). After the feeding of the thousands, "Then those men when they had seen the miracles Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet . . ." (John 6:14). Peter declared on Pentecost that Jesus was "a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs" (Acts 2:22).

The same miracles, described for us in the gospel narratives, have the same convincing effect to bring us to faith. John 20:31 says they were written that we might believe. No, everyone will not believe what is written, but neither did the people who personally witnessed them. The difference is not in whether people today have any less convincing proof, but whether they are open-minded to accept the evidence provided. Jesus makes a particular observation on this point in John 20:29, which should be studied in its connection with verses 30-31.

While, though, we see the above as the primary purpose of Jesus' miracles, there was a secondary purpose which was to demonstrate the love, pity, and concern he has for lost and suffering humanity. Jesus did not come to remake the physical world. His miracles benefitted many people, but when He left this world there was still sickness, food shortages, handicapped people, and loved ones dying. The only universal healing offered is healing for the soul (1 Pet. 2:24).

Yet as we read of His miracles we are impressed with truths more sublime than the events themselves. Because He gave sight to the blind, we know He can open our eyes to the truth. Because He fed the thousands, I know He feeds those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Because He healed a nobleman's son, we know He gives us what money can never buy. Because He performed His first miracle at a wedding feast, we know He rejoices in our joys. Because He cast out demons, we know He has power to deliver us from all the powers of the evil one. Because He healed all manner of diseases, I know He can heal the sickness of my soul. Because He said to the palsied man, "Take up thy bed . . . ," I know He can say to me, "thy sins be forgiven thee." Because He cleansed the lepers, I know He can cleanse my heart. Because He stilled the tempest, I know He can take me safely through all the storms of life. Becauses He raised the only son of the widow of Nain, we know He feels every heartbroken and lonely moment we have. Because He raised Lazarus, we know that He is the resurrection and the life.

Here's The Answer

To Questions You've Asked

Howard Winters

"I recently read a chapter in a book where a respected conservative professor in one of our Christian colleges takes the position that Isaiah 7:14 is not a direct prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ. If I understood him correctly, he said that Matthew only applied (appropriated — HW) this prophecy to fill his need (and being inspired he had a right to do so). Is this view widespread? Is it correct? Would you comment upon the problems involved?" — Name withheld.

These questions involve some problems that have no easy solutions. But as usual we have no reluctance to offer our conclusions on the matter. We will number the three questions so as to make them more easily located.

1. Is this view widespread? Evidently it is. We are hearing more and more of it in recent years, especially from younger scholars who try to explain Isaiah 7:14 independent of Matthew 1:23.

2. Is it correct? Not in our judgment. In fact, it is our judgment (which we think we prove under the next question) that it is absolutely incorrect, so incorrect in fact that it contradicts Matthew 1:23.

3. Would you comment upon this problem? Certainly.

Let us start by observing that something has happened in our day that is almost inconceivable, namely, many conservative scholars, even those in the Lord's church, have adopted the view of liberalism (sometimes in a modified form) of the prophecy concerning the virgin birth of our divine Lord. They tell us that Isaiah 7:14 must be understood within its immediate context. And there (or so they say) it has reference to the birth of a child in Isaiah's own time. It therefore cannot be an exclusive Messeanic prophecy. Several explanations are given, but each boils down either to having Isaiah make a duel prophecy primarily fulfilled in the birth of a child then but ultimately fulfilled in the birth of Christ or else to make Matthew only appropriate the prophecy (spoken of another) to Christ (evidently the view held by the professor in our query). In either case, Isaiah 7:14 was not primarily a prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ.

While we are not disposed to argue with scholars, we believe, based upon what Matthew says about Isaiah 7:14, that they are as wrong as wrong can be in their approach to and interpretation of Isaiah 7:14. We believe that it is exclusively Messeanic. We do not, however, base this faith upon our ability to so interpret Isaiah 7:14 in its context but upon what we understand an inspired man of God to say. We believe that Matthew both understood and clearly stated the concept that Isaiah 7:14 had the birth of Christ exclusively in mind. Consider carefully what he said:

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matt. 1:18-23.)

Let us now raise some questions based upon what Matthew says:

What is Matthew doing? He is telling us how the birth of Christ came about.

Had the manner of His birth been

foretold? According to Matthew, yes.

Who foretold it? The Lord.

How did the Lord foretell it? Through the prophet.

Who was the prophet? Matthew does not specifically say, but we know from the quote that it was Isaiah.

What did the Lord say in the prophecy? "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel."

Who would be with child? A virgin.

Who said so? The Lord through the prophet.

Now it should be obvious that if Isaiah 7:14 does not say a virgin shall be with child (still a virgin after the child is conceived) then Matthew tells us the Lord said something through the prophet which He did not say. But if the Lord did say a virgin (and we believe He did) it is a foregone conclusion that He either had Christ in mind or else there have been two virgin births. If Isaiah said a virgin shall conceive (and Matthew says that the Lord through the prophet did say a virgin shall be with child, which is the same as to conceive), the prophecy could not be fulfilled by anything short of a virgin birth. Thus if Christ is the only virgin born, then Isaiah had Him in view exclusively and Matthew believed that Isaiah had reference exclusively to the birth of Christ. There is no other reasonable conclusive to reach and still maintain the inspiration of Matthew.

But furthermore Matthew says that the birth of Christ occurred as it did (that is, He was conceived and brought forth by a virgin) that that which was said by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled. If that which was spoken by the prophet was fulfilled in the birth of another (in Isaiah's day), how could it be fulfilled in the birth of Christ, especially since the Lord said a virgin would conceive. So from all appearance we must either say that the Lord said a virgin would conceive (and that Mary was that virgin and Christ was the son conceived) or else we must say that Matthew ascribed words to the Lord which the Lord did not say. But if Matthew ascribed words to the Lord which He did not say, there is simply no conceivable way to defend his inspiration. Thus Isaiah 7:14 is either a direct prophecy of Christ or else Matthew is wrong (and consequently uninspired). Thus I see no escape from the conclusion that Isaiah 7:14 is a direct prophecy of the birth of Christ, or that there was a virgin birth in the time of Isaiah, or that Matthew is mistaken in ascribing to the Lord the prophecy concerning the virgin birth. According to Matthew, the virgin birth is the very heart of the prophecy. But even further, the son conceived would be called Immanuel. This means, not only that there would be two virgin births, but two sons called Immanuel (God with us; God in the flesh), if Isaiah does not exclusively mean Christ.

Now as we see it, we have an option: we can either accept the interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 adopted by many scholars (which would certainly make sense apart from Matthew's account) or else we can accept Matthew's account of what the Lord said. But when Matthew's account is taken seriously it appears impossible to accept both. But if we do not accept Matthew's account, we must deny his inspiration. We simply do not have the option of saying that Matthew was inspired while at the same time saying that he said something the Lord said when the Lord did not say it. So our option is to accept the interpretation of modern scholars or to accept the account given by Matthew. We see no reasonable or Scriptural way to accept both.

We may never be able to explain Isaiah 7:14 in its context to the satisfaction of scholars (but we think it can be explained and we think others have done so) to mean the exclusive birth of Christ. But on the other hand, we do not believe that modern scholarship can successfully explain Matthew to mean anything but that the virgin birth of Christ was exclusively foretold by Isaiah. So our advise (until the scholars are able to give us more evidence to the contrary) is to accept the explanation given by inspiration. Frankly we trust Matthew (and his inspiration) more than we trust modern scholarship (or even our own conclusions drawn from Isaiah 7:14 apart from Matthew's account). If Matthew is right, we will be believing the truth; if he is not right, no eternal consequences will follow because we believed a lie (for if the Scriptures are not inspired, nothing ultimately matters anyway — our only hope is the gloom of the grave).

Looking for a Church Without Problems!

Jeff Lovitt, Booneville, MO

Imagine living in the first-century world and deciding to look for a church in the want-ads. The **Galatian Gazette** advertizes that in addition to the gospel plan of salvation through Christ, you must meet their legalistic requirements to be saved (Gal. 1:6-9; 5:1-8). The **Thessalonian Times** advertizes that their church has busybodies that refuse to work in favor of meddling in other men's affairs (2 Thess. 3:7-12). The **Corinthian Crier** proclaims their liberality in accepting anyone as a member there, from one who commits incest (1 Cor. 5:1), to those who bring their own Christian brothers into court (1 Cor. 6:1-8); from those who make a mockery of worship (1 Cor. 11:20-22), to those who quarrel and cause divisions (1 Cor. 1:10-11), and even those who teach false doctrine (1 Cor. 15:12)!

The **Pergamum Proclaimer** and **Thyatira Transgressor** advertize that you can be a standing member of their churches and still "bar hop" and "bed hop" (Rev. 2:14, 20-22)! The **Laodicean Ledger** contains an exclusive ad only for those upper crusts of society who need a religious affiliation to maintain a good appearance (Rev. 3:14-18). The **Sardis Sleeper** did not advertise the church at all, since it was small, quiet, and dying (Rev. 3:1-4).

To those who are serious about living a devoted Christian life, none of these congregations sound appealing! And such behavior is typical of churches even today! Yet Paul (thought oft with heavy rebuke) worked with them to correct the problems. The point is this: there has never been a perfect church because there are **no** perfect people! We should not look for a church without problems because none exist; rather we should look first for a church that overall strives to meet the ideal pattern described in the New Testament: a non-denominational church of Christ, where though there may be problems, there is at least a commitment to restore the authority of the Bible in all matters relative to the plan of salvation and the government and work of the church. Then, instead of looking for a church without problems, commit yourself to making the church one without problems!

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Exceeding the Righteousness of the Pharisees

M.F. Norwood, Dover, TN

In Matthew 5:20, Christ declares, ". . . That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Perhaps it would be well for us to consider the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees if we must surpass it. The character of these men may be described in the following expressions:

1. They were clean, morally clean. Outwardly, they were clean and were even compared to the white-washed tomb. Inwardly they were full of corruption and dead men's bones. They were careful to wash the outside of the cup and platter while ignoring the inside. "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matt. 23:28.) Thus if we are to enter into the kingdom of heaven, we must be careful that we exceed this characteristic.

2. The scribes and Pharises were cold: they cared little or nothing for men. They set other men at nought, while commending themselves. Love, mercy and forgiveness were words which were unknown to their vocabulary of life. And the expression: "The evil that men do live after them, but the good is oft interred with their bones" might well have been a philosophy of these men, for they were always condemning the evil deeds of men and never commending noble deeds. That which Luke recorded in Luke 18:9ff could well apply to men even today: "Unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others."

3. They were critical. These men were experts in finding the faults of others. When men failed to dot the "i" or cross the "t," the scribes and Pharisees took note of it. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." (Matt. 23:23-24.) No man could make a blunder, however slight, and escape their eye.

The Master makes it plain — very plain — that we must exceed the righteousness of the above-named men, else we will be lost eternally. To exceed means to go beyond, to surpass, to outdo, outstrip. What, then, does the Lord require of us?

1. Inward cleanliness. The blessings from above descend upon the "pure in heart." The heart shall be kept with all diligence: "for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). Your cherished thoughts are indicative of your heart — what about them?

2. Our hearts must be warm. God's greatest commandment is love — we must love God. We must love men. If we shut others out of our hearts, the Lord will shut us out of heaven. If we do not love men, whom we have seen, how then can we love God whom we have not seen? Numerous people are "clean" but "cold."

3. Self-security. Before we should ever attempt to criticize others, we must turn the critical eye inward. Paul exhorted, "examine yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5). The lesson here would be that if one would so occupy himself, little time will be left for criticizing others! And when one is aware of his own faults, he will be more tolerant of another's shortcomings.

Let us then obey "from the heart" that form of doctrine, thus being made free from sin — the love of it, the practice of it, the guilt of it (Rom. 6:17-18; 1 Pet. 1:22-23). Then let us "walk in the light" reflecting the true light so that others may seek so to walk!

◆

To Change or Not to Change

Albert Gardner, Spartanburg, SC

Businesses that do not change with the times will stagnate and finally go under. Buggy whips used to be a profitable business. Many years ago Sam Lipscomb used to deal in horses and mules. I thought it a little unusual when he bought the Ford dealership in a nearby town. Obviously that was a wise move.

Churches need to be aware of the times and change in method to meet the needs of people. The day when people would sit by their radio with their Bible and listen to a thirty-minute radio program is gone. We might do as much with a sixty second spot. Think back over the methods we have tried and used successfully for a while. We have now turned to other things because change is essential if we are to be effective.

But there are some things that ought not to change. God does not change. "I change not." (Mal. 3:6.) Jesus does not change He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Heb. 13:8.) The word of God is the same. "Let us walk by the same rule." (Phil. 3:16.)

Some of those doctrines and practices that ought not to change are being placed in the same catagory as methods. It is in the realm of doctrine, worship and morals that we must resist change. If we allow and promote change in these areas, we will have departed from the faith and will have become a different church.

Brother Dabney Phillips wrote that in the more than forty-eight years he has been preaching, "There has been a shift from the distinctiveness of our plea to restore New Testament Christianity. The effort is being made to 'accent the positive and to eliminate the negative' in our proclamation of the word. The Chamber of Commerce approach will not get the job done. Inspired Paul urged Timothy to 'preach the word' and to 'reprove' and 'rebuke.' "

He continues by saying, "We used to preach that there were three works of the church: preaching to the lost; self edification; benevolence. We have in our day added two additional works of the church: politics and recreation."

Brethren who resent or reject making the message so clear that people can see the difference between the church of our Lord and denominationalism are not really doing a favor to anyone. How did we grow to where we are? Men like N.B. Hardeman, G.C. Brewer, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., L.L. Brigance and many others of like mind were able to cause people to see the difference between denominationalism and the church. They did not compromise. They faced error in debates, preached wherever duty called, and wrote the same thing they preached.

We grow and become strong on sound, bold preaching. A change from this practice will result in weak compromising churches. All of us need to reaffirm our faith in restoring the church to the world. If we doubt our location and direction we will be weak and ineffective.

Salvation is in the church for which Jesus died. Friends, we can never "trick" people into the church. We cannot "deceive" them into the church. Trying to "hide" the truth from them is unfair. People have to be taught the truth and they have to see it and believe it before they can obey it.

In order to teach the truth we need not . . . must not . . . be unfair, unkind, or abusive. We must treat them the way we would want to be treated. Do not be fooled into thinking when some people reject the teaching it is because of the method we used. The power is never in the method but in the gospel. They rejected Jesus and He used the best methods.

Have you ordered your *Commentary on First Corinthians?* See ad on back page.

Forgiveness

Jim Mullican, Clyde, NC

The May, 1986 issue of **Reader's Digest** arrived this week, and it contains an article entitled, "Could They Forgive Their Son's Killer?" It is the story of Frank and Elizabeth Morris, members of the Little River church of Christ near Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Their only son, Ted, was a bright and talented 18-year-old who had just finished his first semester of college and was working during the Christmas holidays. On the night of December 23, 1982, a drunk driver crossed the center line and hit him head-on as he drove home from work. He died early on Christmas Eve, a few hours after the accident. Police found the drunk driver, age 24, to have a blood level of 28 per cent, or nearly three times the amount required to be legally drunk. The drunk driver was first put on probation, but later he was jailed because he continued to drink and thus violated his probation.

However, the main point of the story deals with the Morrises and their reaction. They loved their son and wanted to see his killer punished harshly. As they struggled with these feelings, they came to see the drunk driver as a man who was bitterly ashamed of what he had done, but could see no way to deal with the guilt other than drinking. Eventually they began to visit him in jail, studied the Bible with him, forgave him, and Frank Morris personally baptized his son's killer, who the article says is now actively involved in the church and works with the Morrises to prevent others from falling into the same trap he did.

This is an amazing story, isn't it? Could you and I do the same? I hope that I could, but I do not know. I love my son very much. As Judah said of his father Jacob, "His life is bound up in the lad's life" (Gen. 44:30), so is mine with my son, and while I know how I **should** react, I cannot know how I **would.**

Yet while this is an amazing story, it is nothing but a repeat of an older story. God once sent His only Son to earth, and we murdered Him. Yes, you and I crucified Him just as surely as the people of Judea did. And the wonder of it is that His Father forgave us!

"Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now I'm found,
Was blind, but now I see."

Like that young man who killed another and yet was forgiven, let us keep the debt we owe ever before us, and let us live accordingly. "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Christians Witness Slayings

Edmond, Oklahoma. Last August 23 a postal worker in danger of losing his job walked into the post office of Edmond, Oklahoma and gunned down 14 of his fellow workers. It was the third worst mass murder in U.S. history and stunned the nation. Among the fortunate workers who escaped with their lives were three members of the Lord's church: Gene Bray, James McConnell, and Jim Hill. McConnell was only 20 feet away when Patrick Henry Sherrill opened fire on his first two victims. Both he and Hill escaped unharmed, but Gene Bray was critically injured when shot in the back. After spending several days in the hospital, Bray continued his recuperation at home.

Coach Is a Christian

St. Louis, Missouri. Gene Stallings, the new head coach of the St. Louis Cardinals of the National Football League does not fit the mold of a typical professional football coach in that winning is not everything. For Stallings, a faithful member of the church of our Lord, winning football games is third on his list of priorities. Before football comes Christ and then his family. He believes that, despite the demands placed on time by jobs and professional commitments, the spiritual life should come first. Before being named head coach of the Cardinals, Stallings spent 14 years as an assistant coach under Tom Landry, legendary coach of the Dallas Cowboys.

Heston Speaks at DCS

Dallas, Texas. Charlton Heston, world-renowned actor, spoke at the annual Partnership Dinner of Dallas Christian School last October 11. Mr. Heston's speech was entitled "The Pursuit of Excellence." Others who have spoken at the dinner in the past include former President Gerald Ford, Dr. James Dobson, and Art Linkletter.

McInteer Steps Down

Nashville, Tennessee. Jim Bill McInteer has resigned as minister for the West End church of Christ, a position he has held for three decades. The resignation was effective October 23. During his time at the West End congregation, the church was a powerful presence in the religious community of metropolitan Nashville. McInteer said, "I am leaving West End to enter a new sphere of service, not retiring from the ministry or public engagements." He is also president and publisher of **20th Century Christian** and **Power for Today** magazines. He has preached for 47 years and at 65 years old plans to continue his work.

Mission Pioneer Dies

Mesquite, Texas. Hattie Lee Ewing, a pioneer missionary to Japan, died at the Christian Care Center, where she had lived since 1974. Memorial services were conducted on September 22.

Miss Ewing first went to Japan in 1926 and worked in Shizukoa, Japan for about 40 years. Her work was interrupted by World War II, but she returned to the mission field after the war. In an article written for **20th Century Christian** in 1984, Frank Pack said, "Three single women of remarkable faith and dedication served in Japan in the early years of mission work there: Sara Andrews, Lillie Cypert, and Hattie Lee Ewing. Pack went on to say that sister Ewing "lived in a most self-sacrificing way."

News Briefs

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte. Archdale indicates that bonds being issued to finance their new building additions are still available. Contact them for information. The Ladies Bible Class is regularly providing "tray favors" at a local hospital. They have a Youth Rally scheduled for February 27 — March 1, 1987.

Raleigh. Brooks Avenue congregation has named Bailey Forrest as Campus Minister.

Kernersville. Statements from the Linville Forest elders and from Michael Stone indicate that he has decided to leave the work there. Both the minister and the elders expressed support for one another.

Asheville. The Biltmore congregation recently reached an attendance of 280 in connection with a Sunday designated as "bring-a-friend day."

NC Conversions:

North Main Street, Mocksville, 2; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 10; Northview, Statesville, 2; Rockingham, 2; Fayetteville, 1; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 8; Meadowbrook

Rd., Asheboro, 1; Archdale, Charlotte, 1; Gastonia, 1; Jericho, Mockville, 1. Total: 29.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Columbia. Wendell Winkler will preach at St. Andrews Road church December 12-14.

Spartanburg. Albert Gardner will be away from his regular work at Central on a missionary trip to India November 3-December 11.

Greenville. Ten additional deacons have been added to the Northeast congregation's work, bringing the number of deacons to 21.

Rock Hill. Charlotte Avenue has completed remodeling which adds seating for about a 100 more in their auditorium, bringing the capacity to over 400.

SC Conversions:

Kingsburg Rd., Sumter, 3; North Charleston, 1; Duncan, 1; St. Andrews Rd., Columbia, 1; Taylorsville, 2; Northeast, Taylors, 1; Myrtle Beach, 1; Central, Spartanburg, 1.

Washington Avenue, Greenville

BILL SMITH, Reporting: We had a good meeting in September with four area preachers. One put on Christ since our last report.

BACKFIRE

Letters to the Editor

Dear Howard:

I enjoy receiving **Carolina Christian.** It is good to read the fine articles, and to hear about what is going on "at home" in the Carolinas. — John Bost, Suffolk, VA

Brother Bost is a native son of the Carolinas. While he is away from "home" he is doing a fine work for the Lord in Virginia.

Dear Howard:

Just a brief note to compliment your editorial in the August issue. I mean to make no defense of the NIV, but we do have a lot of critics who have no idea what goes into the making of a good translation, nor do they understand that we will probably never have a perfect one. Your editorial is timely and speaks to a need that we have in the body of Christ today. Thank you for a job well done. . . . I appreciate **Carolina Christian.** — D. Gene West, Fairmont, WV

Brother West is the editor of *Bible Herald,* a monthly published primarily for the churches of Christ in the Ohio Valley, but filled with much good reading, true to the Book, and opposed to error. We recommend that you subscribe to it. Send your subscription ($7) to brother West, 609 Prospect Ave., Fairmont, WV 26554. We guarantee you that his editorials will be worth far more than the subscription price. In fact, his editorials are unsurpassed by any among us.

Dear brother Winters:

I want to express my appreciation and approval of your editorial policy. It seems to me that any fair-minded person would surely not want the truth suppressed and neither would they want suppressed the freedom to present all views on a topic. I think your editorial in the August issue was excellent. We are prone to just accept the things we are accustom to and familar with. We do this without question. A study of God's word with an open mind is a real need of many Christians today. — Ralph J. Jones, Columbia, SC

Brother Jones is a member of the Board of Directors of *Carolina Christian.* Words would utterly fail us were we to try to express to him our deep appreciation for the support and encouragement this letter brings. About the best we can do is say, "Thanks! We needed that."

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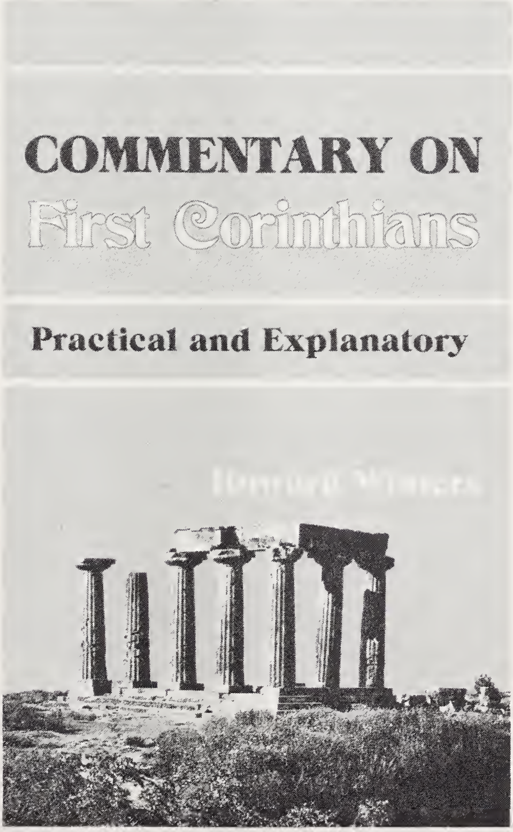

COMMENTARY ON
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See Editorial on Page 2
and Excerpts on Page 12

editorial

Ready — Commentary on First Corinthians

Since our **Commentary on Romans** was offered to the public two years ago (and the sales of it have gone far beyond anything we could have hoped for) and it was known that we were in the process of writing another one on First Corinthians, scores of people have inquired about it, some just wanting to know when it would be out, others ordering the book without knowing when it would be published, and a good number making a contribution to help us publish it. Such response has been both gratifying and encouraging — gratifying because it appears to say that our work is not in vain and encouraging in that it has motivated us to get the work done and the book published. Thus it is with some pride that we make the announcement that, the Lord being willing and all going as scheduled at the printers, the book will be ready by the time you read this or very soon thereafter . . . and certainly not later than the middle of January.

For those who might be interested, it follows the exact same format as the one on Romans. It covers the book of First Corinthians verse by verse and is written in language that is easy to read and understand. It tackles every verse and every problem as it comes to them. There is no verse omitted and no difficulty shunned. And while we do not expect everyone to agree with us on everything, we do ask for a brotherly and charitable hearing on all matters of difficulty and controversy. All that we can say in our defense is that we have done the best we could with what we had, and we have done that honestly and sincerely. The book is 238 pages in size and is beautifully bound in colorful paper. We have priced it as economically as we feel can be done. Because of the high cost of production and advertising (not one penny of royalty is being paid nor does anyone associated with **Carolina Christian** receive a dime out of it) it does not appear possible to market it for less than $7.95 (see our ad on the back page of this issue for special pre-publication prices, which will be good through January at least). Because of the tremendous cost and the financial status of **Carolina Christian**, we are frank to confess that we need your order for this book **now**. At the time of this writing we are over $5,000.00 short of the amount it will take to pay the printers. So we are urging all our friends to order a generous supply — use them as gifts, class study guides, to help teach prospects the truth, etc. We are so sure that you will be pleased with it that we are making a money back guarantee on all pre-publication orders (on all orders, as far as that is concerned). If after you have purchased and read the book you conclude that it is not worth the price, return it to us and we will gladly refund your purchase price. No questions asked. Can we make a better offer than this?

"Just Say No"

We were thrilled with the President and Mrs. Reagan's joint address to the nation Sunday night, September 14, on their war

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against drugs (including alcohol). It was a powerful appeal to a nation to save itself from this evil and destructive force. Hopefully they can wake the conscience of many against drug abuse where we, as religious people, have largely failed.

As all readers of **Carolina Christian** know, we declared war on both drugs and alcohol early in our ministry and we have not retreated . . . nor is it our intention to ever do so. But we must confess that at times we have felt that we were simply butting our brains out against a brick wall. When we entered the battle we expected opposition from the world (especially those who manufacture and sell alcohol), but this has not proven to be a formidable obstacle. Few non-Christians have ever questioned the rightness of the cause (though the fact may be that they have simply ignored our efforts). The great surprise came from members of the Lord's church. Many did not only not stand with us, they condemned us for our opposition to the improper use of drugs and alcohol, especially alcohol. Some went further: they actually defended the drug traffic. That was shocking within itself, but we had not seen the end yet. Some even argued that the use of alcohol is a great blessing to the world (one went so far as to essentially say that Jesus Himself was a drunkard). Thus rather than support the effort to remedy the problem, many professed Christians became a part of the problem — they became supporters of Satan's work. And to make matters worse, some have even withdrawn from churches because the leadership stood solidly against the abuse of drugs and alcohol (thus proving that they would rather give up Christ than drugs). To say the least, this is a sorry picture to present to the world of the church for which Jesus died.

We love the First Lady's response to some teenagers who asked her, "What can we do when we are offered drugs or alcohol?" She replied, "Just say no." They were so impressed with that simple, straightforward answer that they formed a "Just Say No" organization, and now there are 10,000 of them across the country. This shows that progress is being made and that others (even those who are not Christians) are joining hands to defeat this evil. Is it therefore not time for Christians to wake up and take their stand on the sober old Book, the Bible? Is it not time that we, as one man, oppose evil rather than defend and practice it?

As Christians there are many things to which we must learn to say no. As an example, we urge you to "Just say no":

1. To drugs and alcohol.
2. To illicit sex (whether premarital or extramarital).
3. To gambling, dancing, or anything else that stimulates lust or minimizes honest labor or interest in the Christian system.
4. To dishonesty. Honesty is a rare commodity in today's world.
5. To the lure and temptation of the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life.
6. To immodest dress.
7. To pornography, whether on stage, in the movies, on TV, in books, or in magazines.
8. To abortion. Learn to respect all life. It is sacred.
9. To anything and everything which would lead you to neglect your duty and move you away from pure Christian living.

One of our problems is that many of us are still children in attitude. A child thinks he must have everything he wants just because he wants it. We carry that attitude over into adulthood, and thus think that if we want it we must have it. Our attitude is often that if it give us some kind of high, or relieves us of pain, or makes us feel good, or if it satisfies a craving, or if it closes out the real world (which we do not have the courage of heart to face), then we must have it. But not so. Dr. Paul Faulkner says, "Grab your 'wanter' by your 'willer' and make yourself do what you know you ought to do, and God will help you do it." That is a huge amount of wisdom in one short sentence. It simply says, "Grow up." Be a man. Or as Paul puts it, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity." (1 Cor. 16:13, 14.) It is time, past time, we learned to say no . . . and that on many more things than just drugs and alcohol.

Covered by Grace or by Blood?

New issues bring new and different ways of expressing our concepts. Currently there is a vast movement under way to try to justify our differences in religious matters (whether great or small) and even some apparent violations of God's law by saying that some differences and violations must be covered by grace or else we will all be lost. This must be the case because no man living is one hundred percent right in either conclusion or practice. Thus if grace does not cover some faults and mistaken conclusions, and even some errors in practice and deviations from the Scriptural standard, there is no hope for anyone. While we think we know what brethren (and many of them are the best God has on earth today) mean by "covered by grace," we neither like the expression nor do we use it as relating to man's weaknesses and sins of ignorance. We think the expression and the way it is being used point up a need for us to refine our vocabulary — to find a more suitable expression for the thought we are trying to convey.

There can be no question but that man is weak, ignorant, and plagued with a severe inability to live above sin, that is, to be absolutely perfect in both thought and action (cf. 1 John 1:8-10). Nor can there be a smattering of doubt that we are saved, if saved at all, by the rich and marvelous grace of God (Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 2:11, 12). And it is equally as certain that there must be some means by which the weak and sincere who differ on certain subjects can be saved. Thus we think that there can be no question whatsoever but that God, by His endless grace and mercy, has provided the means of covering some imperfections in the life of Christians, and this must include some sins not specifically repented of because they are sins not specifically known. This security, the knowledge that if one continues to trust in Christ his sins of weaknesses and ignorance will be forgiven (not ignored) by some means provided for in God's great scheme of redemption, is one of the believer's greatest consolations. One is simply not required to live in fear that there might be something in his life, unknown to him, out of harmony with the will of God, that may cause him to be lost. No man can do better than to sincerely live the best he knows, than to do what he honestly believes is right to do. We think such a one has an attitude of repentance, that is, he would gladly turn away from any sin in his life if he knew about it. He is consumed with a desire to do God's will in all things. He knows, therefore, that when he walks in the light the blood of Christ keeps on cleansing him from sin (1 John 1:7). But is it correct to say that God's grace covers these sins? Perhaps in a sense, but not in the sense that many appear to be using it today.

To say that a sin is covered by grace (or so it appears to us) is to say that God overlooks it, ignores it, shows tolerance or leniency toward it, does not regard it as serious (does not count it as sin), or else turns His back on it, sweeps it under the rug and thus treats it, not as an offense against His holiness, not as a violation of His divine law, not as a dethroning of God and an enthroning of man as his own ruler, but as a matter too light for divine notice or concern — just humans being human type of behavior. This kind of concept minimizes the serious nature of sin, destroys the force of law, and makes God unjust by shrugging His shoulders at and closing His eyes to some sins while condemning others. This simply cannot be the case, regardless of how small, harmless, or insignificant we may think a sin is. Sin, all sin, is serious. And it always invokes both the wrath and grace of God — wrath against it and grace to provide the means of escape from it. It is not, however, the function of grace to cover sins, but to provide the means by which they are to be covered or forgiven. And the means is the shed blood of Christ. Only forgiven sins are covered sins.

Thus to be more precise and to more accurately express what we mean, we should drop the expression "covered by grace" and use in its stead "covered by blood," the blood of Christ, shed to pay the awful price for sin. When a sin is covered by blood it is forgiven, not simply overlooked or ignored. Its true nature is recognized rather than compromised. The only sin man will not have to account for, not have to pay the penalty of, is the one covered by blood (forgiven). Make no mistake about it, grace provides the covering (blood) for sins. But if God had been able to cover it without the blood (without the penalty being paid), Christ would not have died. Let us not, therefore, minimize the seriousness of sin by confusing terms: grace provides the covering for sins but it in and of itself does not cover them (in the sense of overlooking or disregarding the fact that they are a violation of heaven's holy law). God simply does not tolerate sin. It is either forgiven (covered by blood) or else it condemns. Any notion of tolerance of sin (regardless of how high our motives might be in so thinking or how concerned we might be for those involved) cheapens the great price paid for its redemption at Calvary. One is not required to be perfect to stand justified before God, but in order to do so he must have every sin covered by the Redeemer's blood. This is man's only hope.

Don't Embarrass God

God is holy (1 Pet. 1:16). The basic meaning of holy is separated. When applied to God it means totally separated from all injustices and sin (Hab. 1:13). When applied to man it means separated from sin to the service of God. As a consequence of this separation, when one is holy (separated), he should live pure and as free from sin as possible (cf. Rom. 6:1, 2). As the separated people of God, we represent God and His cause (the cause into which the separation brought us). That is to say, we are samples of what true religion is — we are samples of what obedience to God's plan will make people.

When people see us, the way we talk, act, and conduct ourselves in relation with others, they conclude that that is what God made us to be. That is, what we are is what they think the cause of God is. When we live unholy lives, practice the works of the flesh rather than bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:19-23), we thus reduce the cause of Christ, our dear Redeemer, to nothing more than a worldly institution. And since God is too holy to look upon sin, in the sense of partaking of it or being associated with it in any way, and since we are by our actions associating God (or His cause) with sin, we are placing God, in the minds of certain people (especially those who are seeking an excuse for not serving Him), in an embarrassing position. We are compromising His truth. Do not misunderstand this point: God is not in that position in and of Himself, but by our sinful practices we place Him there as far as the thinking of some is concerned. This no child of God should ever be guilty of doing. God is to be praised, not embarrassed.

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The Mote and the Beam

Johnny Melton, Stateville, NC

In Matthew 7:3-5 Jesus said, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Clarence Jordan offers the following very loose translation which nonetheless sheds some light on this passage: "Now why do you keep on looking at the splinter in your brother's eye, and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How do you have the nerve to say to your brother, 'Brother, please let me pick the splinter out of your eye,' without even noticing the plank in your eye? You phony, first get the plank from your eye, and then you'll see better to pick the splinter from your brother's eye."

When we understand that a mote is a splinter while a beam is a plank, we will better appreciate the humor in the Lord's story. Humor is often an effective means of driving home a lesson. However, we will make a serious mistake if we merely smile at this story instead of learning the essential truths contained in it and applying them to our lives.

The first lesson to be learned from this passage is that the Lord looks on the hypocrite with disgust. The disposition to find fault is usually found in those guilty of grave faults themselves. It is as though they think that focusing attention on the sins and weaknesses of others will diminish their own. Often such folk argue that the sinfulness of others is license for them to sin. What is more hypocritical than the person who refuses to do right because some who are trying to do right sometimes fail?

Second, we should learn the absolute necessity of guarding our own lives against the evil of fault-finding. We all have our "planks" in our eyes. Admitting our sinfulness is an essential step in dealing with the "planks." We cannot rid ourselves of sin alone, but we have at our disposal the remedy for sin. We can "arise and be baptized and wash away [our] sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.)

What a wonderful world this would be if every individual would be concerned about correcting the faults in his own life. It has been observed that if every man would clean up in front of his own house, soon the whole city would be clean. Jesus said, "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye." It is the responsibility of every individual to "clean up his own act." And that, of course, is accomplished by obeying the gospel of Jesus.

The third lesson is this: It is not wrong to point out the sins and trespasses of another, **per se.** Jesus said, "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt you see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

John Stott has well observed, "The standard of Jesus for relationships in the Christian counter-culture is high and healthy. In all our attitudes and behavior towards others we are to play neither the judge (becoming harsh, censorious and condemning), nor the hypocrite (blaming others while excusing ourselves), but the brother, caring for others so much that we first blame and correct ourselves and then seek to be constructive in the help we give them." (Stott, John R.W. **Christian Counter-Culture,** pp. 179-180.) Chrysostom said of one who has sinned, "Correct him, but not as a foe, nor as an adversary exacting a penalty, but as a physician providing medicines."

Let us never play the role of the hypocrite. Rather, let us seek to cover our own sins in the blood of Jesus and then let us share the knowledge of grace with those we know.

* * *

Start Your Day Enthusiastically

John D. White, Sr., Union, SC

Did you ever hear of those awful Mondays? Some have even suggested that we remove that day from the calendar. Seriously, each and every day of our lives are just about as exciting as we make up our minds for them to be. Perhaps these thoughts will assist you in having and enjoying good days in your life.

1. **Begin Each Day With Some Positive Thought Concerning God and His Word.** (A.) "I fear God, and next to God, I chiefly fear him who fears Him not" (Saadia ben Joseph). (B.) "There is no book so varied as the Bible, nor so full of concentrated wisdom" (Herbert Hoover). (C.) "The most difficult translation of the Bible is that which must be translated into Christ-like living."

2. **Begin Each Day Thinking Good Thoughts About Others.** (A.) "By sweeping out hate you rob your enemy of power over your mind" (Riney). (B.) "Be quick to praise, people like to praise those who praise them" (Bernard M. Baruch). (C.) "No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of it for another" (Charles Dickens).

3. **Begin Your Day With Definite Goals or Plans in Mind.** (A.) "Not failure, but low aim is crime" (James Russell Lowell). (B.) "Many of us spend our time wishing for things we could have if we didn't spend half our time wishing" (Alexander Woolcott).

4. **Begin Each Day by Putting Something Out of Your Life Which Has Been Hurtful to You.** "Our young people saw what drugs and music can do," said John Hanks, a former rock musician turned evangelist, as 30 teenagers burned boxes and bags full of rock-n-roll albums and cassettes in Huntersville, N.C. That's good.

5. **Begin Each Day Early and With Positive Thinking (i.e. This is going to be a good day).** (A.) David informs us about this practice (Ps. 57:8; 63:1). (B.) Isaiah had something to say also about rising early (Isa. 26:9). (C.) Consider Jesus' practice (Mark 1:35). (D.) Consider the principle inherent in Genesis 24:12, "send me good speed today." (E.) Think about Joshua in Joshua 3:7. "This day will I begin to magnify thee." (F.) "This is the day that the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it." (Ps. 118:24.)

6. **Take Time to Enjoy Life and Do Not Allow Modern-Day Roller Coaster Style of Living to Engulf You.** "Lately, I've been entertaining the paradox that progress may demand us to go backwards!" **Have a good day!**

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The Lost Art of Meditation

Bruce Green, Sumter, SC

Word association: meditation. Transcendental meditation, yoga, eastern religions. Did you associate meditation with Christianity? Did it call to mind a personal practice?

If you are like most people, you answered "no" to these last two questions. That's because meditation has become a lost art among Christians. It has gone the way of the buffalo.

What is meditation? It is not studying, although studying should lead to meditation (read the Psalms). It is not prayer, although meditation should lead to prayer (read the gospels). Meditation is reflection, introspection, self-examination. When properly observed, the Lord's Supper involves meditation.

Why do we not practice meditation? Certainly part of the reason is the negative connotation of the word. "Meditation" conjures up images of some guru with his legs crossed like a pretzel chanting a mantra. There's also the problem of time and then when we do find leisure time we spend it in environments so bombarded by visual and audio stimuli that meditation is impossible. Finally, there is our production conscious mentality which causes us to frown upon such a non-productive use of time. No immediate, visible results are achieved and the investment of time is immediately brought into question.

Okay, what benefits are there in meditating? The Psalmist writes of the blessedness of the man who meditates upon the law of the Lord (Ps. 1:1-2). The apostle Paul spoke of transforming our lives through the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:1-2). Throughout His life on earth, Jesus periodically withdrew Himself from people to pray and I am sure these occasions included meditation. Do yourself a favor and read Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:23 and Luke 5:16.

Is meditation meaningful? Why don't you think about it? "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." (Ps. 19:14.)

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Casting Stones

Henry L. Fuhry, Asheville, NC

One of the most moving, poignant, and dramatic stories in the life of Jesus on earth was the confrontation between Him and the scribes and Pharisees found in John 8:1-11. In this event there were three main characters: Jesus, the leaders in the church, and a woman. According to the religious leaders the woman had been caught in adultery and as such according to the law deserved to be put to death by stoning. In their continual efforts to trap Jesus, they asked Him what His verdict was. They wanted to see if Jesus would uphold them or whether He would let the woman go "scot-free." If He sided with them, then all His talk about forgiveness would be that, just "talk." If He forgave the woman, they could then accuse Him of condoning "loose living." And even worse, if He forgave her, He could be charged with blasphemy, since only God could forgive sins. Jesus had already attempted to teach them that He was, in fact, God, and could forgive sins, but such lesson just did not register with them (Matt. 9:1-6; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-24).

Jesus broke the confrontation and tense situation with a rock. He knew what they were up to and so He paid little or no attention to them as He wrote on the ground. Then He picked up a rock. No, He did not throw it. Nor did anyone present! Rather, He said to them: "He who is without sin should cast the first stone!" There are at least four lessons for religious people today which are contained in this story about the "first stone." Let us review them:

No One Is Sinless

The "first stone" is a lesson about sin. It reminds us that we all deserve death for the sins we have committed. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23.) His rebuke shook them! They knew that He knew their lives, that they were full of sins. They had forgotten or ignored the teaching in Deuteronomy 17:5-7. His answer was like a bolt of lightning.

Sins Cannot Be Classified

The "first stone" is a lesson about self-righteous people. It is very easy to make some improvement in our conduct and then feel that we are better than others. It is not difficult to find and judge others for their sins and yet overlook self-sins and ignore the admonition on judging others (Matt. 7:1, 2). There are no small sins or big sins. Sins are contrary to the will of God, and are "sins" no more, no less, and are unacceptable in His sight. It is just as much a sin to make up an untruth about a person and pass it around as it is to rob a bank of thousands of dollars. So, let us never attempt to catalogue or categorize sins into big or little groups.

The Deity of Christ

The "first stone" is a lesson that Christ is God's Son. In this instance He not only showed the weakness of the scribes and Pharisees, but He also proved that He was God. If only God could forgive sins, and Jesus forgave sins, then He is God! "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30.) From an emotional standpoint this story tells us that Jesus did not come to drive the oppressed, the discouraged, or the sinful people into the ground. In Matthew 9:13 Jesus said, "For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Jesus in His ministry related mostly to people who knew they were lost. He came to preach and teach the poor, to proclaim release to the captive, to heal the sick, and to set free those who were downtrodden (Luke 4:18).

Forgiveness

And then the "first stone" is a lesson about forgiveness. Had that first stone been thrown, the woman would have been taken out of her misery, but not permanently. Had it been cast, the self-righteous might never have learned their lesson, if indeed they did!

Probably all we would have learned would be that sin is all right but do not get caught! However, we have learned forgiveness from this story of the "first stone." Jesus told the woman, "neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." (John 8:11.)

It would do us all well if we would go to the creek or field and pick out a few rocks. Any kind will do. They do not have to be large or small, smooth or rough, or well shaped. Just ordinary rocks. Then place one of them in our kitchens or on the mantel at home, anywhere it can be plainly seen. Or place one on your desk where you work, and carry a small one in your pocket. Let these stones well placed continually remind you never to cast the "first stone." Such will constantly remind us that "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ." (Rom. 8:1.)

". . . But I Don't Have the Time!"

Sara Kemp, Stanley, NC

How many times have you been asked to do something and given this reply: "I'd like to but I don't have the time." Of course, this will usually bring responses like this: "We can always find the time to do anything we really want to do." Or "Everyone has the same 24 hours a day."

Cliches like these can be very devasting to someone who really feels pressured by "time."

Luke 2:52 says, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." If these areas were so important to Jesus who is God's Son, they should also be important areas that our "time" should revolve around.

Jack LaLanne, the famous exerciser, has said, "You have twenty-four hours every day to do whatever you want. And you are the sum total of how you use those hours." But, oh how busy we Christian women seem to be. After all, we are mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, neighbors, employees, aunts, grandmothers, etc. Oh, where will we find the time! Sometimes our main problem is that we cannot seem to say "no." Oh, how guilty we feel when we are asked to do something! So instead of saying "No" we compound our time problem. So, what is the answer? Let me suggest two things: time management and discipline. That sounds good but what does it mean on a daily basis?

In order to manage our 24 hours of time in a disciplined way, we must first decide what areas of our lives are important to our Christianity. We must prioritize and concentrate on those things that will best utilize our time and will result in a disciplined disciple.

Let me share with you the four areas where all my activities and concerns are concentrated.

PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY NEEDS

A daily time in prayer and Bible study is our lifeline. "And when He sent them away, He departed to the mountains to pray." (Mark 6:46.) If we are not careful, however, these can be nothing more than a "hit and miss operation." Just as Jesus left His disciples and followers to pray, we must also set aside a time to be with God in prayer and study. Only you can decide what time of the day is best for you. Once that time is decided, the next question is "What do I study?" and "What and who do I pray for?"

What to study? My most effective study is when I study a topic. In addition to looking up all the Scriptures I can find on a particular subject, I also try to find a good study book to read. This helps me get a good insight on all aspects of the subject.

In order for prayer to be effective, it must also be regular, planned, and systematic. We usually feel that prayer must be spontaneous for it to be sincere and heartfelt. But, instead, our prayers are usually sketchy and not specific. So we fall back on Romans 8:26. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." We use this as justification for not being specific in our prayers. Let me suggest that God **wants** us to ask and ask **specifically.** We read in John 14:14: "If you ask anything in my name, I will do it." When we ask in generalities, we receive in generalities.

In order to keep myself on "track" in prayer, I find it helpful to write my prayers out on paper. This services two purposes: (1) God knows that I know what I am asking for, and (2) I know when a prayer has been answered.

PERSONAL/PHYSICAL NEEDS

These are things that are important to the individual as a person, such as exercise, an enjoyable hobby, a new learning adventure, etc. Just as Jesus grew in "wisdom and stature" so must we not neglect our minds and bodies. Careful attention to our diets and exercise result in a healthier body that can better serve others. Learning and reading sharpen our minds and many times will help us in living and dealing with others on a daily basis.

Again, these are individual needs that must be planned for and enjoyed. Recreation for the mind and body are essentials for daily living.

FAMILY NEEDS

All of us have families. Some of us have our immediate family members (parents, children, brothers, and sisters) living in the immediate area. And, of course, many of you still have children in the home.

When do we find the time within the 24-hour time frame for these very important people? Again, it gets down to planning quality time. Of course, children in the home need and deserve more quality time than immediate family members who live outside the home. Grown children who no longer live in your home can be visited by telephone or visits and time together can be planned. But our physical families should not consume our time so that other needs are neglected.

Although these very important people deserve our time and attention, the one family need that must never be neglected is time that is spent with a husband or wife. We must never get so busy meeting needs of others at the expense of our mate. If you and your mate decide that twice a month you are going to have a "date" with each other, carefully guard that time so that less important (but maybe more demanding) obligations do not interfere. That should be a priority time unless you jointly agree to reschedule that time together. It may be that friends or family members want to spend time with you on your "date night." This is where priorities must be analyzed.

SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Under this category is our worship time, our fellowship time with other Christians, and those special Christian friendships that are developed through time spent together.

Any scheduled services at the church building that we attend are "food for the spirit." Not only are we worshipping God but we are receiving strength from our brothers and sisters in Christ. The fellowship we enjoy is no accidental happening. God knew that we would need each other — hence the spirtual family or the church. The wonderful friendships that develop out of our Christian fellowship are beyond price. But as with anything that is worthwhile and valuable, this takes time, effort, and cultivation. But it is such a blessing!

This is what time management is all about. We need to decide where we are going in our 24-hour time frame and where God would like us to go and be. Then we need to learn to say "No" to anything and everything that would get in our way.

Remember, just because something is important and worthwhile does not necessarily mean that it fits into our time management scheme. Collecting for the Cancer Society is important but does it fit for you? Teaching in Vacation Bible School is important but does it fit for you? Everything that is good and important cannot always be included. This is where we need to put activities in a priority listing, concentrate on those things that are important and eliminate those things that do not fit or belong in our 24-hour scheme.

The next time you are tempted to say "But I don't have time!" ask yourself these questions: (1) Do I really want to do it? (2) Will it fit into my priority categories? (3) Will it be detrimental to my "needs" if I say "No."

We must learn to prioritize, eliminate, and concentrate!

Excerpts From Commentary on First Corinthians

Howard Winters, West Jefferson, NC

My commentary on First Corinthians is now at the printers and should be ready for shipment by the time you read this, or very soon thereafter. Because it is much larger than the one on Romans the price will have to be no less than $7.95. But to help us pay the huge printing bill (nearly $8000) we are making a special pre-publication offer when payment accompanies the order of only $6 (and we pay the shipping) — $5 each in lots of 10 or more to the same address. It is the hope of the publisher **(Carolina Christian)** that you will want several copies at this price, one for yourself and others for gifts. In order to give you an example of the method followed (the same format as in Romans) and the quality of the contents, I am here lifting the following excerpts from chapter 9 (more may be given later):

9:5 **Have we not power** — Do not we have the right (BV). **to lead about** — To take along (NASB). He not only had the right to support for himself, it was a right to sufficient support for a wife and family who might accompany him in his work. **a sister,** — A believer; a Christian. **a wife,** — Wife is in apposition to sister, hence, a believer who is a wife. This establishes the fact beyond question that an apostle, or any other worker in the church, had a divine right to marry and a divine obligation to supply the needs of his family. One may choose not to exercise this right, as did Paul, but it is presumption of the highest sort for others, whether it be man or church, to bind celibacy on an apostle, preacher, missionary, or anyone else. It is one thing for one to choose the single life (cf. chapter 7), but something entirely different for man or church to bind it on him as a human law necessary to be obeyed in order to please God. One of the marks of apostasy is forbidding of marriage (1 Tim. 4:1-3). I doubt that Paul meant to say that an apostle (and consequently anyone else who spends his time in service to the church) would not have a right to take along a wife who was an unbeliever, providing he had married her before he became an apostle. It seems to me that an unbeliever might receive indirect support through her husband, who is supported by the church, but she could not be supported directly in the work (which she would not be involved in anyway). But surely no apostle, preacher, missionary, or others who devote their full time to the Lord's work would consider marrying an unbeliever or a non-Christian. Paul's point is simply that he had the right to take a believing wife with him with full expectation that she would be supported by what he received from the church, since she would be a partner in the work. **as well as other apostles,** — Other apostles were supported by the church who had wives. **and as the brethren of the Lord,** — The four fleshly brothers (actually half-brothers) of Jesus (Mt. 13:55-56). At first they did not believe in Him (Jn. 7:5), but now they were active leaders in the church (15:7; Gal. 1:19). **and Cephas?** — Peter. But why single out Peter? Perhaps the HS looked down through time and saw the human and false system of Roman Catholicism which claims Peter as its first pope and yet denies marriage to all its clergy, including the pope. He made certain that none could deny that Peter was married. He had both a wife and a mother-in-law during the time of Christ (Mt. 8:14-15; Mk. 1:29-31). Here he is still leading her about. Thus Peter could not be a pope now and he certainly was not one then.

9:21 **To those that are without law,** — The third illustration of how he became all things to all men. Those without law are the Gentiles (Rom. 2:14), and may include the Jews who are citizens of other countries who are not under the Mosaic law as a civil code — no one, Jew or Gentile, is under the law religiously. **as without law,** — Without the law of Moses. That is, he did not observe it as a civil code when he was among the Gentiles. **(being not without law to God,** — He was not lawless. The law of Moses is not the only law God ever had. His moral law is always in effect and He revealed His will (His law to them) to Adam, Noah, and Abraham long before the law of Moses was given. **but under the law to Christ,)** — The new covenant law (Heb. 8:6-13). While we ordinarily have little or no problem in seeing the law of Christ (the gospel or NT system) in contradistinction to the law of Moses (the OT system), the religious world around us cannot or does not make this distinction, and even those of us who do are as likely as not to see both systems as law systems, only the new as a superior one. Many deal with this dilemma by denying that the gospel is a law. But this will not do in view of Paul's plain statement here and elsewhere (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 6:2). The gospel is a law — it commands, prohibits, promises blessing, and imposes penalties. Those who violate it sin (1 Jn. 3:4). We thus need to ask, "In what sense is the OT a system of law while the NT is a system of grace (Jn. 1:17) when both are laws?" One way to illustrate this is by the means of justification. The OT is a system of law *per se*, a system by which no one can be justified (Rom. 3:20); the NT is a system of grace, that is, it offers justification by means other than by law keeping *per se*. One can be justified by law only by never violating it or by paying the penalty in full. But no responsible person can live without violating the law. All have sinned (Rom. 3:9, 23; 5:12). Thus all must pay the penalty. But the penalty is death, eternal death. No one can therefore pay the penalty and live. Thus it is impossible for one to be justified under a system of law. But the gospel offers a third means of justification, namely, the death of a substitute. Under the gospel all still sin, the penalty of sin is still death, and the penalty must be paid. But it is paid by another, the death of Christ on the cross. By this means the gospel offers forgiveness or justification without the violater personally paying the penalty (this the law could not do *per se*). The penalty is paid by the death of the only begotten Son of God. He died in the sinner's stead. So when one sins under the gospel he has a propitiation for his sins (1 Jn. 2:2). He can live because the price of sin, the penalty of death, has been paid by another, Jesus Christ the Lord. One appropriates that death to himself by obedience to the gospel (Rom. 6:16-18; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Pt. 1:22). Thus under the NT system one cannot be justified without obeying the gospel (God's will or law for man in the Christian age). While it is true that we are not justified by obedience *per se*, there can be no justification without obedience. A failure to obey is to disobey. And certainly no law (not even the law of Christ) can view one justified who stands in open rebellion to it. Such is unthinkable. The death of Christ is the cause of justification; obedience is the means of it. Both are necessary. And one is not efficacious without the other. Thus the difference in the OT law and the NT law is the difference in having no means of pardon and in having the demands of law fully satisfied in the penalty being paid by another. **that I might gain them that are without law.** — His purpose: that he might give them no occasion to close their minds against his message.

9:25 **And every man that striveth for the mastery** — But whoever enters the contest (BV) or competes in the games. **is temperate in all things.** — Exerciseth self-control (ASV) or practices self-restraint (Moffett). The contestants in the games spent ten months in rigid and strict training and during that period scrupulously denied themselves of any indulgence that might lessen their chances of winning. **Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown;** — A wreath of leaves that soon withered away and even the glory it represented soon faded. **but we an incorruptible.** — Our race is for an eternal crown that never withers — a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8), of life (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 1:10) and of glory (1 Pt. 4:7-8). The crown is not just for one, the first to cross the finish line, but for all who fight the good fight (1 Tim. 6:12), keep the faith, and finish the course (2 Tim. 4:7-8). The argument here is from the lesser to the greater: since they undergo excessive physical and mental discipline and long months of self-denial and training for a temporal crown, how much more we should be willing to endure for the eternal. It should be noted here that we are now in the race; the crown remains yet to be won. The focus here is on the dedication and discipline it takes to persevere unto the end (Rev. 2:10). Those who think the crown is received at the time the Christian race begins and can never be lost (sometimes called eternal security) take no account of athletic contest and thus miss Paul's point absolutely. If Christians do not strive for the mastery (that is, run the race to its final end), they cannot be crowned victors. The crown is reserved (1 Pet. 1:4) for those who finish the race. It is therefore ruinous, consequence of eternal magnitude, for Christians to be soft (unable to endure hardships) and self-indulgent (slaves to desire, appetite, and habit).

Four Confessions

Bill Griffin, Spartanburg, SC

In Matthew 16:13-15 the Lord asked the question, "Whom do men say that I am?" What is the hearsay, the ideas about me? It was Peter who said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This was the response to the question, "But whom say ye that I am?" What men say about Jesus does not always match the facts about Jesus. It is important that we confess Jesus as Lord, the Christ if we desire to be saved.

The subject of confession is not written about or discussed that often. It is an important part of the gospel plan of salvation and more. There are four confessions to consider in this article and all are important to the Christian.

The Good Confession

The Good Confession is made with the lips. Peter gives us this confession in Matthew 16:16 " . . . You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." In Acts 8:30ff the Ethiopian was taught Jesus by Phillip and asked to be baptized. "And Phillip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:37.) That confession was expressed in baptism for forgiveness of sins (Acts 8:38; Acts 2:38).

In writing to the church in Rome, Paul declared that if we confess with our mouths Jesus and believe in our hearts that God has raised Him we will be saved. He declares that, "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10.)

In John 9 the parents of the one healed of blindness were afraid to confess Jesus. They wanted the approval of men more than God. Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38.) The importance of the "Good Confession" cannot be overstated. We shall make this confession on earth or perish, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God."

The Christian Confession

People will judge the church by what we do and not what we say. Christians are the light of the world. "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matt. 5:16.) The Chistian confession is made with the life. It is not shining your light rather it is letting your light shine. Paul wrote, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." (Rom. 14:7.) Everything we do and say effects others. We must live our lives in such a manner as reflecting the life of Christ, much like the moon reflects the light of the sun. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:5) "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleaneth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.)

The Christian confession is to be lived. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." (John 15:4.) The Christian confession is found in living and abiding in Christ and letting the light shine.

The Confessions of Sins

The child of God can sin and have need for confession of that sin. In Luke 15 the story of the lost son is recorded in verses 11-31. The story is well known by most. The one son asked his father to give him his share of the estate which the father did. The foolish son spent his money in wild living. After spending his money a famine came on the land and he found himself in need. He found a job feeding pigs and became so hungry that he longed to eat the pigs feed. The Lost Son made his mind up to go home and confess his sins to his father, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men." (Luke 15:19.) The father was eager to have his son return and welcomed him with the fattened calf and a robe and ring.

The confession of sin is made with the lips and the heart. James says to, "confess your faults one to another" (5:16). John through the Holy Spirit tells us that, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.)

The Confession Every Tongue Will Make

Someday we will all stand at the judgment seat of Christ and we all shall give account to God. Every person who has lived will be there on that faithful day. The Bible says, "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." (Rom. 14:11.) We ought to confess him now as Lord and Christ. Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord in working out salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:10-12).

Conclusion

The four confessions discussed here are true and faithful to the New Testament account. The four confessions include: (1) the Good Confession; (2) the Christian Confession made with the life; (3) the Confession of Sins one to another; and (4) the Confession every tongue will make at the judgment.

If you have not confessed the name of Christ based upon your sins, you are not saved. Why not call upon the name of the Lord in the manner described in the Bible. Like the father described in Luke 15, He awaits your return with open arms.

Is Instrumental Music in N.T. Worship Forbidden?

Albert Gardner, Spartanburg, SC

There are two views about how we get authority for what we do in worship. Earle West says, "The one view of expediency was that whatever the word of God did not specifically disallow was permissible." (Vol. 2, p. 91.) The other view is that only what is authorized is acceptable. Those two views are poles apart. One should carefully study this matter, for it makes the difference between pleasing God and being disobedient to Him.

Let us consider the view that anything is acceptable that is not expressly forbidden. Where is the Bible verse that forbids burning incense, counting beads, instrumental music, a Big Mac on the Lord's table, polygamy, or sprinkling? One can readily see that to open the door allows any and all of these things to come in.

When instrumental music is being considered in N.T. worship, the question is often asked, "Where does the Bible forbid it? Since we don't have such a verse, then we can use it." On the same basis we ask, "Where is the N.T. verse that forbids infant baptism?" There is none. What the N.T. does is to tell us that those who are to be baptized are to be old enough to hear, believe, repent of their sins, and confess with their mouth Jesus as the Christ. Infant baptism is forbidden because the Lord told us what to do. You see the parallel, don't you?

J.M. Pendleton wrote a very powerful argument in 1867 that we have used for years on the topic of instrumental music in worship, though he was showing that sprinkling is forbidden by a positive statement from God. On pages 81-82 in his **Church Manual Designed for the Use of Baptist Churches**, published by the Broadman Press, he wrote: "It may be laid down as a principle of common sense, which commends itself to every candid mind, that **a commission to do a thing authorizes only the doing of the thing specified.** The doing of all other things is virtually forbidden. There is a maxim of law, that **the expression of one thing is the exclusion of another** [emphasis his]. It must necessarily be so; for otherwise there could be no definiteness in contracts, and no precision in legislative enactments or judicial decrees. This maxim may be illustrated in a thousand ways. Numerous Scriptural illustrations are at hand. For example: God commanded Noah to make an ark of **gopher wood.** He assigns no reason why gopher wood should be used. The command, however, is positive, and it forbids the use of every other kind of wood. Abraham was commanded to offer his son, Isaac, for a burnt offering. He was virtually forbidden to offer any other member of his family. Aye, more, he could not offer an animal till the order was revoked by Him who gave it, and a second order was given, requiring the sacrifice of a ram in the place of Isaac. The institution of the Passover furnished an illustration, or rather a combination of illustrations: A lamb was to be killed — not a heifer; it was to be of the first year — not of the second or third; a male — not a female; without a blemish — not with a blemish; on the fourteenth day of the month — not on some other day; the blood was to be applied to the doorposts and lintels — not elsewhere."

There is actually as much authority for infant baptism as there is for instrumental music in worship today. They are both forbidden when the Lord tells us what to do. Look at some more examples.

1. **Moses was told to make a golden candlestick in Exodus 25:31-40.** Just think of all the materials out of which candlesticks could be made. But none of us wonders about what Moses was to do and what was forbidden. Gold was the positive statement and every other substance was forbidden even though they are not expressly named.

2. **God told Moses to speak to the rock.** He did not tell him not to strike the rock, but it was forbidden when He told him what to do. God said, "Ye believed me not." (Num. 20:12.)

3. **Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire.** What is "strange fire"? It is fire "which he commanded them not." In Leviticus 16:12 fire for incense was to be taken from the altar of burnt offerings. Though it is not expressly stated, fire from any other source is forbidden.

4. **Gopher wood was used for the ark.** Noah was instructed to build the ark out of a specific wood. Many substances are available for ark building, but they are forbidden because God stated the material to be used.

5. **Baptism is immersion.** What verse forbids sprinkling? Romans 6:4 says it is a burial. Examples of Jesus and the eunuch show us what they did. The word itself means immersion. Though no verse expressly mentions sprinkling, it is forbidden by positive statements of Scripture.

6. **Baptism is in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.** This does not include baptism in any other name. In fact, baptism in any other name is forbidden for it is not included in this divine command of our Lord.

7. **The Lord's Supper consists of bread and fruit of the vine.** All other foods are forbidden though we have no express statement on it, nor do we need one. The clear teaching about what we are to do eliminates all else.

8. **Moses directed the people to kill a passover lamb.** He forbids all other animals in this way.

9. **Christians are instructed to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).** The Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to write in Greek though He knew all the words necessary to get the message of God to the people. He did not use a word that meant or included "to play" though there were such words. He said sing. This forbids any other kind of music.

What is stated forbids what is not stated. The doctor writes a prescription and the pharmacist uses only drugs listed and knows all others are forbidden. At the restaurant the waitress writes down what we want and does not list all we don't want. When one makes a map for us they list only the roads we are to take and we know that all other roads are forbidden. Your insurance policy lists your car and that forbids all others; it will list your house and will not insure any other. A positive statement excludes all others.

The right view for what we do in worship is to do what the Bible authorizes, and it authorizes singing.

BROTHERHOOD NEWS

Dennis Conner, Yadkinville, NC

Ethiopian Mission

Stockton, California. Relief efforts for the starving continue to be carried out by churches of Christ in Ethiopia. John Clark, editor of the **Ethiopian Mission Report,** a bi-monthly newsletter, reports that the intensive care center at Jido was filled with sick children in September, which is an indication that the famine-related problems still exist in many areas.

Noting that feeding programs and relief efforts in Ethiopia have been criticized because of government interference, Clark responded by saying, "In any program the size of the famine relief work in that country with so many agencies, some capable and some not, doing their work, there will always be mistakes, waste and even some corruption. However, we want to assure you that in all the work of our brethren in Ethiopia, the only food wasted has been a few sacks of beans that got wet because of a small leak in one container . . . of the thousands of tons shipped and received, all has gone to feed the starving, except for what is in stock in the warehouse at this time. . . . In addition, we have not seen or experienced what was described in the article in any of the relief agencies we have worked with." **(Ethiopian Mission Report,** October, 1986). "The article" Clark was referring to appeared in a recent issue of **Reader's Digest** and accused the Ethiopian government of waste and corruption.

Clark also reported that ten containers of food weighing twenty tons each are enroute to Ethiopia, and that a well-known Adventist preacher has been converted.

Claiborne to Be Honored

Henderson, Tennessee. It has been announced that Winfred Claiborne, will be honored at the Appreciation Dinner the first night of the annual Freed-Hardeman College Bible Lectureship. The Lectureship begins February 2, 1987.

ETSPM Lectureship Theme Announced

Knoxville, Tennessee. The theme of next year's lectureship at the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions will be "The Books of Peter, John and Jude." The lectureship will be conducted March 1-4, 1987.

Mankin to ACU

Abilene, Texas. Jim Mankin, pulpit minister for the Madison church of Christ in Madison, Tennessee and speaker on the "Amazing Grace Bible Class" television program, has resigned his position at Madison and will take a new position at Abilene Christian University. Mankin has been appointed to the position of Director of the Center for Christian Leadership in the College of Biblical Studies. His duties will begin January 1, 1987.

* * *

News Brief

David Pharr, Rock Hill, SC

Please send news reports to David Pharr, 339 Charlotte Avenue, Rock Hill, SC 29730. Items must be received by the next-to-the-last Thursday of the month. We would like to be on your bulletin mailing list.

North Carolina

Charlotte. Archdale has begun construction on their new classroom and fellowship addition. They are still offering bonds to raise funds for planned expansion. Contact them for a prospectus.

Charlotte. Providence Road has announced a Carolina Leadership Workshop for February 20-22.

High Point. The Olga Avenue congregation has announced the appointment of Al Simmons as their new minister.

Raleigh. The Brooks Avenue church's work at the Polk Youth Center continues to bring results. Eighteen men were baptized there on November 11.

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NC Conversions:

Wilmington, 3; South Fork, Winston-Salem, 2; Brooks Ave., Raleigh, 16; Providence Rd., Charlotte, 1; Northview, Statesville, 1; Central Haywood, 1; N. Main, Mocksville, 2. Total: 26.

Central Haywood, Clyde

JIM MULLICAN, Reporting: The Central Haywood church of Christ began meeting in Clyde in 1981, with approximately fifteen members who had formerly comprised the Old Thickety church of Christ. The wisdom of the move from a rural location to one more accessible to the public can be seen in the growth which has occurred since that time. Membership is now approximately seventy, and attendance at Sunday morning worship averages about seventy.

In July the church paid off the note on its property and will become fully self-supporting as of January 1, 1987. Yesterday, November 9, 1986, was a great day for the congregation, in that the first elders in the history of the congregation were appointed. They are Paul Brown, Chuck Hutto, Bill Messer, and Jim Mullican, who is also the evangelist. Plans call for deacons to be appointed in early 1987.

On the same Sunday when elders were ordained, three people placed membership and one was baptized. Thus far in 1986, a total of thirteen have placed membership, five have requested prayers and/or been restored, and four have been baptized into Christ.

South Carolina

Duncan. The Spartanburg Blood Bank held a blood donation day at the Duncan meeting house. This is an opportunity that ought to be considered by other congregations.

Taylors. Northeast surpassed their goal of $15,000 on November 9 by giving over $23,000, all of which was designated for missions. They have announced the addition of Brooks Kennedy to their staff.

Rock Hill. Dowell Flatt will preach in a weekend meeting January 2-4 at the Charlotte Avenue church.

SC Conversions:

Northeast, Taylors, 7; Myrtle Beach, 1; Charlotte Ave., Rock Hill, 3. Total: 11.

Carolina Leadership Growth Seminar

Providence Road Church of Christ
4900 Providence Road, Charlotte, NC
(704) 364-0748

February 20-21, 1987

Friday 7:30 p.m.	Building Leadership Relationships, Abe Lincoln
Saturday	Theme: "Shepherds Among the Sheep"
8:30-9:00	Registration/Devotion
9:00-10:00	The Shepherd of God, Abe Lincoln
10:00-11:00	The Aim of Shepherds, Truman Scott Women Leadership Session I, Ferne Scott
11:00-2:30	Workshop Sessions: Shepherds Among the Sheep, Abe Lincoln, Truman Scott
2:30-3:30	Caring for Endangered Sheep, Truman Scott Women Leadership Session II, Ferne Scott
3:30-4:00	The Joy of Shepherding, Abe Lincoln Women Leadership Session III, Ferne Scott
Sunday	Theme: "Leadership Emphasis Day"
Adult/Teen Classes	Preconditions for Leadership Development, Truman Scott
Assembly	Atmosphere for Leadership Development, Abe Lincoln
Pre-Assembly Evening Session	Building Relationships in the Congregation, Scott
Evening Assembly	Qualities of Spritual Leaders, Truman Scott

* Housing will be available
**If there are any questions please feel free to contact us at the above number.

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